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# THE PROFIT OF LOVE



# THE PROFIT OF LOVE

## STUDIES IN ALTRUISM

By  
A. A. MCGINLEY

WITH PREFACE BY  
REV. GEORGE TYRRELL,  
AUTHOR OF "LEX ORANDI," ETC.

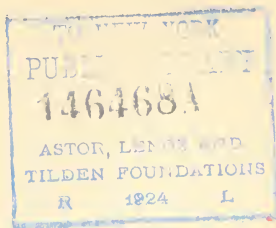
*If I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor . . . and  
have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. — 1 Cor. 13: 3.*

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To

MY NEIGHBOUR

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## PREFACE

THERE is no doubt but that the Utility-Philosophy of J. S. Mill and the Positivists has secretly permeated the mind of modern Christianity and altered its fashion of apprehending the Gospel. In the teaching and example of Christ we find much that admits of an utilitarian and altruistic interpretation. We find stress laid upon deeds, as opposed to words, theories, and sentiments. We find the service of God identified with the service of man; our neighbour presented to us as the vicegerent of Christ, as one to whom all we owe to Him is made payable. We are told to work the work of God; to work while it is yet day, ere the night cometh. We are shown our Divine Leader toiling and suffering for the help of others; and we see His apostles and disciples pressing hard on His footsteps. We are warned that faith without works is dead; and that the tree must be judged by its fruits.

But are we not, owing to our unconscious utilitarian bias, in great danger of forgetting that works without Faith are also dead; that what is judged and valued in the eyes of God is the Tree and not its Fruits; that it is the inward or immanent side of our actions which alone has eternal and absolute value?

It needs no doubt a considerable depth of faith, that

is, of spiritual intuition, to realize that this religious "externalism" which measures Charity by the quantity of its outward results, by the greatest happiness of the greatest number, is necessarily self-defeating in proportion to its energy. Its falsehood is analogous to honeyed lips which say so much more than they mean; which know nothing of eloquent reserve. In both cases the utterance exceeds the truth. Worse than that, the faculty of sincere kindness is destroyed; acting becomes a weariness; interest flags; and, eventually, selfishness reasserts its supremacy.

Even to cultivate and nourish the inward root of such beneficent activity merely for the sake of more abundant fruit-harvest is still to be under the bondage of utilitarianism. It is to make a means of the end. What then? Does the Christian value the outward only for the sake of the inward? Does he serve his neighbour solely to develop his own spiritual excellence; or to increase his own merit and pleasingness in God's eyes? If so, were not the crudest altruism preferable to this reflex spiritual egoism? This is a reflection that has often led the naturally selfless to plunge themselves headlong into some whirling vortex of outward activity with a deliberate suicide of their inward life. For without some external leisure, however little, without some explicit and intentional care of the spirit, the noblest sort of life must degenerate into mechanism and fretfulness.

Not till we realize that the inward life, from which all true and fruitful beneficence must spring, consists

neither in the service of self, nor in the service of our neighbour, but in that of God, shall we be delivered from these counter-fallacies of unspiritual altruism and spiritual egoism.

Our sovereign End and Object of service must be that which is Good absolutely, and not merely relatively to oneself or one's neighbour; it must be the Ideal, the Divine Will; the Eternal Ought. Only as springing from this root, only as controlled by this rule, will our self-love and our neighbour-love be well-ordered, fruitful, or enduring. The cultivation of this Divine Love, far from being selfish, consists in a ruthless war against selfishness, in a fierce struggle to rise above the selfish to the Divine standpoint; to view Self and Neighbour with the eyes of God, and to blind the lower vision; to live the life of God; to work the work of God.

The spirit and tendency of the present volume are determined more or less explicitly by these considerations. The social endeavour of these days, whether inside or outside the Church, whether ostensibly religious or merely humanitarian in its avowed motives, is undoubtedly a product of the Christian spirit. If it be partly true that Positivists and Humanitarians have shamed Christians into a healthy emulation in well-doing, it is only because there are elements of Christianity in Positivism that are often too much neglected by Christians. As against the unsocial, self-saving, self-concentrated religion which it has supplanted, the active, energetic, beneficent altruism of modern religion is an advance in the development of the Chris-

tian spirit. But like every reaction it has its excesses and limitations. The turning from the inward to the outward, from self to others, has brought with it a loss of depth, a dissipation of spirit, a materialistic conception of beneficence. Never has there been more zeal for social betterment; never were there richer means at its disposal; but never was it less a zeal according to knowledge — if we speak of the ultimate end of its striving.

What the author insists on is, that we need men and women rather than schemes and systems; that the remedy is to be sought in character rather than in legislation; that we must work at the roots of social good and evil, not at the branches and extremities. It is not the vocation of the Church's ministers as such to deal directly with social and political problems. But in raising the spiritual level of the multitudes, in creating or re-creating the Christian character in as many as possible, they deal with such problems, indirectly indeed, but most radically and effectually. Our first duty to our neighbour is an inward one — a duty of judgment and feeling — "to love him as myself." Till this sense of substantial inward equality is established all external equalization is mere insincerity and condescension. It is itself the root and essence of our duty; and will spontaneously bring forth fruit in due place and season without effort or self-consciousness. But this inward sense of equality is only gained in the act by which we rise above the "psychic" to the "spiritual" plane, and pass from

the selfish, or at least clannish, to the disinterested love of Goodness. And this act is one that cannot be produced, deepened, and sustained without a certain deliberate self-watchfulness and self-discipline; without the liberties and opportunities of religion.

Let no one sit down comfortably, as so many do when they take up a book on religion, and read these pages in a spirit of blind uncritical docility as though the author must bear the responsibility for whatever they gather from this book. Where so much is said there will be much that is true; much that is partly true; something that is not true. An infallible book on religion would not be worth reading or writing, for it would necessarily consist of truisms and platitudes. A helpful book is one that is full of ventures and suggestions; that wakes our opposition; that puts us on our guard; that makes us think and criticise; that forces us to examine our intellectual and moral consciences. Of such help the reader will find abundance in these pages. He will not be rocked to sleep to well-known ditties and lullabies, but will be jolted and kept wide awake. If he wants to slumber, he must lay this book down and try some other.

GEORGE TYRRELL.





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## INTRODUCTORY

### NEW THINGS AND OLD IN THE HOUSE- HOLDER'S TREASURE

The Universe is change; our life is what our thoughts make it.

— MARCUS AURELIUS.

IN the swift passing of the old and the eager forwardness of the new, there come moments to all of us in these days of action when the pressure of these contrary currents against our lives gives us a sense of peril, a momentary panic at finding ourselves caught midway in the rush of such rapid changes from the traditions of the past to the realities of the present. By some strange ordering of Providence in the lives of this generation, we have been born into a time when the footholds bequeathed from the past have been snatched from before our feet to make room for a new order of things, far more precarious in its untried newness than even the worn out footholds we have been deprived of.

The speed of construction and of manufacture which is the order of the day in the material world seems active also in the operations of the world of thought. Hasty conclusions, revolutionary propositions, startling conceptions in regard to everything of vital importance to the soul here and hereafter, follow so fast

upon one another that their very eagerness to supplant the old with the new idea often defeats the Providential mission of the latter to a world which is waiting for its message. These changes are too rapid for the slow growth of solid conviction. We are not given time to prove things ourselves, to make a test of them in our own lives. This is done for us in the laboratories of science, with infinite pains and unlimited resources. The incontrovertible facts of science seem to lie in ambush all about us. We live along the best routine of life we can make for ourselves amid these revolutionary changes; and all the time there are busy processes at work and active investigations on foot in the field of science threatening to break out upon us at any moment with some new and disturbing discovery that may wreck the whole frame of thought upon which our lives have been lived and planned and all our hopes projected.

Science is too well equipped with the bounties of time and resources for us to be overbold in challenging the results of its researches. We hopefully conjecture there may be ways and means of disproving much that modern research throws up out of the caverns of the past. But we feel it is a case for the specialist; it calls for as good an equipment in time and training to disprove these deductions of science as was used in building up the hypotheses. The specialist, too, can approach these mysteries without the fear and trembling that would palsy our own efforts. He has nothing at stake behind the veil his irreverent hand would not

hesitate to lift. He would probably see nothing if he did lift it; while we might feel our spirits shaken to their foundations by the significance of his revelations to our personal lives. The difference between the approach of the specialist to the world of mystery, and the approach of the man of faith, is too great to be ever spanned by a common point of view. They may both start from the same basis, and travel along the same path in their researches, but the view of one is focused upon a single point, — the vacant place in his chain of evidence; the eyes of the other are scanning heaven and earth for greater signs and portents of these unrevealed mysteries than can fit under the circle of the microscope. One is thinking; the other is only calculating, and classifying thoughts. This, to quote one who tried to both reverently think and boldly classify at the same time, is "the narrowing, one had almost said, the blighting, effect of specialism. . . . The men who in field and laboratory are working out the facts do not speculate at all. Content with slowly building up the sum of actual knowledge in some neglected and restricted province, they are too absorbed to notice even what the workers in other provinces are about. Thus it happens that while there are many scientific men, there are few scientific thinkers. The complaint is often made that science speculates too much. It is quite the other way. One has only to read the average book of science in almost any department to wonder at the wealth of knowledge, the brilliancy of observation, and the barrenness of the idea. On the other

hand, though scientific experts will not think themselves, there is always a multitude of onlookers ready to do it for them. Among these, what strikes one is the ignorance of fact and the audacity of the idea. The moment any great half-truth in nature is unearthed, these unqualified practitioners leap to a generalization; and the observers meantime, on the track of the other half, are too busy or too oblivious to refute their heresies. Hence, long after the foundations are undermined, a brilliant generalization will retain its hold upon the popular mind; and before the complementary, the qualifying, or the neutralizing factor can be supplied the mischief is done.”<sup>1</sup>

It is not science but the popularizing of science that does the mischief.<sup>2</sup> To popularize anything a large measure of what will appeal to the lower elements in man's nature must be used in order to bring a speedy response from him. It is slow work convincing his intellect, and so the appeal is usually made to his emotional nature first. If the new idea had no other attraction than its newness, this would be sufficient to win a welcome for it from the multitude, always athirst

<sup>1</sup> *Ascent of Man: The Missing Factor in Current Theories.*

<sup>2</sup> “Thousands of innocent magazine readers lie paralyzed and terrified in the network of shallow negations which leaders of opinion have thrown over their souls. All they need to be free and hearty again in the exercise of their birthright (to believe) is that these fastidious vetoes should be swept away. All that the human heart wants is its chance. It will willingly forego certainty in universal matters if only it can be allowed to feel that in them it has that same inalienable right to run risks, which no one dreams of refusing to it in the pettiest practical affairs.” — *The Will to Believe: The Sentiment of Rationality.* Professor Wm. James.

for novelty, and restless to ease the strictures of life's daily routine of duty by upsetting the laws on which that duty rests.

It is neither disbelief in the old or distrust in the new that disturbs us so much, however, as the lack of time and opportunity to properly examine the claims of both. The effort to keep up with the present without being untrue to the past is what is to-day testing the metal of men's souls. The ingenuous and unthinking multitude, who have no conscious policies to uphold, frankly disclaim the old at the point where the new steps in and offers better values for the investment of effort; be that effort the labour of hands or the struggle of conscience. It is here that the real harm is done: the mission of the new perverted and the best influences of the old destroyed; for here is where the opportunist, that charlatan of the ages, the betrayer of the past and the deceiver of the present, works his way with the multitude and leads it neither forward nor back, but into the mazes of his own schemes, whose purposes and policies he alone holds the secret of. He catches the attention of the crowd by the same old trick of crying, "new lamps for old." The secret of his success is his alertness in using the passing moments as currents on which to float these new theories and untried beliefs out onto the wide-open sea of public opinion; and then to advertise his "panacea" for all the ills that come from the mischief they cause among the multitude.

While the worst method, morally speaking, of dealing



with the conflict between the past and the present is that of the mere opportunist's, who is concerned only with the advantages afforded to his own schemes by new conditions, the unwisest methods are too often found among those who are the most sincere and the most unselfish in their concern about these questions. Policies of the past, with their application only to the conditions of the past, are poor weapons with which to meet the exigencies of the present. The limitations of knowledge that belonged to a period when the means of human communication did not include the swift agencies of information employed in our present era, were limitations that may have proved the salvation of many, besides being the safeguard of most of the human race. But — whether for our ultimate good or ill — it is no longer within our power to safeguard the unlearned and unstable by so simple a means as keeping them in ignorance of that which it is dangerous for them to know. The scientist is abroad, and the newspaper is his ally. The only heresy in the creed of either is the policy of caution or expediency.

The ethics of modern advertising indeed remind us of that saying in Ecclesiastes, "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the learned, nor favour to the skilful; but time and chance in all."<sup>1</sup> It is the timeliness of a thing and the opportunity of presenting it that to-day win success; and the modern newspaper exactly meets this situation. Popularity, not perfection, is its

<sup>1</sup> Eccles. 9-11.

criterion of all values; and the multitude has been wonderfully apt in learning this false code of ethics. Its theory is, That is good which is popular, which the people most demand; and that is better which is more popular. Success brings success.

It is a terrible parody of the voice crying in the wilderness, this shrieking optimism of our time, with its false promises of making the crooked ways straight and the rough ways plain. The Pharisee, as well as the charlatan, of the ages is the advertiser; and the interests of Christianity are in a bad way when the most successful method of promoting those interests is found in appeals that captivate the mood of the moment for new things, new aspects of life in its relations to the present duty and the future hope. Popularity can never be a strictly Christian portent of the rise of a new dispensation of truth. It is too contrary to Christianity's precedent for testing the genuineness of its prophets, from the solitary Baptist to the silent and forsaken victim of Calvary. "*He shall not strive or cry out; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets.*"<sup>1</sup> This fever for the new seems to feed on noise and strife, seems to prosper most where discontent and loud-voiced ambition break up life's peace. The success of its mission depends not upon the permanency of the convictions it may be able to plant in the minds of its followers, but upon the number of followers its vainglorious ambition can boast of as showing the immediate results of its teachings.

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 42-2.

Natural law itself seems to regulate the growth of the superior and the genuine by deliberateness of manner and secrecy of method; in contradistinction to the rapid and ostentatious development of the spurious and inferior. "There is an ascending scale of slowness as we rise in the scale of life. Growth is most gradual in the highest forms. Man attains his maturity after a score of years; the monad completes its humble cycle in a day. What wonder if development be tardy in the creature of eternity? A Christian's sun is sometimes set, and a critical world has as yet seen no corn in the ear. As yet? 'As yet,' in this long life, has not begun. Grant him the years proportionate to his place in the scale of life. 'The time of harvest is not yet.' Again, in addition to being slow, the phenomena of growth are secret. Life is invisible.

. . . *Thou canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth.* When the plant lives, whence has the life come? When it dies, whither has it gone? — *Thou canst not tell . . . so is every one that is born of the Spirit. For the Kingdom of God cometh without observation.*"<sup>1</sup>

While the delusion of our age seems to be a renewed worship of the golden calf in the form of "the great god Success," it is plain to those who are watching for the messages that come from the heights rather than from the depths of human life that this generation has shown strange and unusual symptoms of a reaction against materialism in religion that must predicate a

<sup>1</sup> *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, p. 83.

favourable condition for great spiritual development at some no distant day. It is true the wild orgy of the idolatrous worship of material good goes on down in the low valleys where human nature herds and struggles and sins while its spiritual leaders have their gaze fixed upon the mountain top. But the place to look for hope and deliverance is only to those heights where human aspiration and holiness have touched the highest point in their up-reaching for the unseen Good. And from these heights come messages to this generation that promise more than it as yet dreams of in its sordid ignorance of true values; food for the spirit that its gross appetite is not yet prepared for.

Fantastic and offensive may be some of the latter-day forms of spiritualistic religions and schools of "ethical" development which are striving to supplant all creeds and outward professions of faith in the Divine; yet are they not in their vague gropings perhaps forecasting a time when soul instead of sense shall be commonly recognized as the higher and more legitimate medium of communication with the supernatural? Their denial of the testimony of the senses, and the contradictions they offer to human nature's way of proving the Unseen, is playing no small part in preparing the common mind for a conception of truth which will not "demand a sign" for proof, with that arrogant incredulity of old which would test all truth and good from above by miracle — that unwilling resource of Omnipotence in winning the testimony of the senses to the spirit.

While these strange developments in the religious world seem to be signs of at least a stronger growth of the spiritual faculties of the race — however malformed and erratic some of these growths may appear at present — evolution itself is bringing forward some remarkable testimony to prove the theory that man, having reached the summit in the scale of his physical development; having furthermore discovered forces in nature that will do his work for him in whatever direction and to whatever extent he may wish to carry the element of purely physical force, making further exertion on his part foolish and unnecessary, there is now no future for that irrepressible impulse in man's nature toward the great Beyond except in the direction of the spiritual world. "Silently, as all great changes come, Mental Evolution has succeeded Organic. All the things that have been now lie in the far background as forgotten properties. And man stands alone in the foreground, and a new thing — Spirit, strives within him. . . . What strikes one most in running the eye up this graduated ascent is that the movement is in the direction of what one can only call spirituality. . . . we have passed from the motive of fear to the motive of sympathy; from the icy physical barriers of space to a nearness closer than breathing; from the torturing slowness of time to time's obliteration. If Evolution reveals anything, if science itself proves anything, it is that Man is a spiritual being and that the direction of his long career is towards an ever larger, richer, and more exalted life. . . . This gradual perfecting of

instruments, and, as each arrives, the further revelation of what lies behind in Nature, this gradual refining of mind, this increasing triumph over matter, this deeper knowledge, this efflorescence of the soul, are facts which even Science must reckon with.”<sup>1</sup> From research along the lines of purely physical phenomena the scientist reached a point where he must needs stop short or connect his chain of evidence with psychic phenomena. Having classified this to the limits of human research, he is stepping on into the Unknown; into a region of mystery where the senses, those crude instruments of his former researches, will be only a burden and a hindrance to him. The world of unbelievers as well as believers has grown sick and weary of the “trite monotone running through thought and literature to-day: We know only what we see or feel or taste or hear or smell.” And so the messages that may come from these experiments with the Unseen are waited for not only with interest, but with pathetic anxiety, by the great foolish world of doubting souls who are staking their eternal salvation on them.

But much of the burning zeal we hear of for the enlightening of the race by the new discoveries of science, and this fever for the truth in new forms, is at heart only the old unholy hunger for the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge; rather than the true aspiration of the soul for perfect good. The spiritual sense which seeks to know and discern *all* the mysteries of unrevealed truth is at a very rudimentary stage of develop-

<sup>1</sup> *Ascent of Man*, pp. 118, 185.

ment. Spiritual growth, or soul growth, is marked by an ever increasing attraction to the ever-receding mystery of truth. A great soul learns more from the silences of God than from its own or others' interpretation of His meaning in visible signs and symbols. Soul growth is away from definitive knowledge of God into that conception of Him which is unutterable by sign or symbol. "The grand theme of prophets: idolatry, the worshipping of dead idols as the divinity . . . not God but a symbol of God — unlimited, implacable zeal against this is the characteristic of all great souls." <sup>1</sup>

Even the human sense quickly wearies of all that may be circumscribed by the intelligence, and ever yearns for new and untried things: The eye seeks distance in its outlook upon the external world; it loves the interminable expanse of sea and land that suggests unimaginable beauty beyond the lines its vision fails to carry it. When the city has wearied us with its treadmill pace, we find rest and refreshment for both soul and body in Nature's solitude, luring our feet into its unexplored depths. The "desire of the everlasting hills" is upon us; the soul has released its sentient grasp upon external things, and the body's weariness is forgotten. Spirit and sense alike expand to greater capacity for the Infinite as this consciousness of infinity grows upon them. Knowledge which is not lost in mystery at the end of its last conclusion would seem too poor and mean a thing for any human

<sup>1</sup> *Heroes and Hero Worship*, p. 346.



soul to be attracted to it as a goal; not to speak of its seeming to any soul the measure of all good. God attracts the soul by eluding it; stimulates it to greater zest in its pursuit of Him by hiding Himself more the nearer it seems to approach to Him. "But if I go to the east, He appeareth not; if to the west, I shall not understand Him. If to the left hand, what shall I do? I shall not take hold on Him: if I turn myself to the right hand, I shall not see Him. But He knoweth my way, and hath tried me as gold that passeth through the fire. . . . *I have not perished because of the darkness that hangs over me, neither hath the mist covered my face.*<sup>1</sup> Truly "mysticism is the love of God."<sup>2</sup>

The rationalist cannot understand, or rather misunderstands, that state of repose in which the soul with faith lies prostrate before the Unknown and Unknowable. He has circumscribed his own vision, imprisoned his mind within the limits drawn by his physical perceptions, and here he keeps his restless spirit chained; not believing that peace lies only in the ineffable mystery beyond, in which the soul may lose itself in never-

<sup>1</sup> Job 23: 8.

<sup>2</sup> Henri Joly. *The Psychology of the Saints*:

"Of course this proposition is not convertible. 'Mysticism is the love of God'; but not all love of God is mysticism, though it contains the rudiments or elements of mysticism in so far as all love, both human and Divine, is a principle of life and conduct which refuses the analysis of reason, having instincts and intentions which enable it to reach to conclusions, speculative as well as practical, to which reason can never even crawl. Still the word 'mysticism' is reserved for an unwonted degree of such unitive insight, just as sanctity is used only of extraordinary degrees of sanctification, and heroism for a fortitude that seems superhuman." — Father Tyrrell in Appendix to the above.

ending accessions of knowledge, merging into ever-increasing depths of desire. "Mysteries, which have no direct ethical value, bear most directly on love, which ever seeks a certain infinity and hiddenness in the object of its affections. A thoroughly comprehensible personality could have no attraction for us. . . . It is neither what we seem to understand about God that feeds our love; nor the fact that He is infinitely beyond our understanding; but the fact that we can ever progress in love and knowledge, and always with a sense of the infinite 'beyond.' It is at the margin where the conquering light meets the receding darkness that love finds its inspiration." <sup>1</sup>

The only lasting thing in life, surviving all change without, persevering through all deviations of purpose and defects of method within, is this insatiable hunger of the soul for the Infinite. It is this hunger for God that creates the capacity for God; it is this which forms the root of the principle of perfection in the individual soul; and in the growth of that root lies the promise and the fulfilment of the prophet's eter-

<sup>1</sup> *Lex Orandi*, p. 49.

"After all, what accounts do the nethermost bounds of the universe owe to me? By what insatiate conceit and lust of intellectual despotism do I arrogate the right to know their secrets, and from my philosophic throne to play the only airs they shall march to, as if I were the Lord's anointed? Is not my knowing them at all a gift and not a right? And shall it be given before they are given? . . . It is a gift that we can approach things at all, and, by means of the time and space of which our minds and they partake, alter our actions so as to meet them.

"There are 'bounds of ordinance' set for all things, where they must pause or rue it. — 'Facts' are the bounds of human knowledge, set for it, *not by it*." — *The Will to Believe*. Professor Wm. James; p. 271.

nally persistent cry that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Only in the culture of this growth can the work of salvation legitimately go on. Is not this culture the only real and true soul-saving plan in existence? Is not this the only principle of salvation that has stood the test of the ages? This is the leaven working in the mass that will in time leaven the whole world. Human defeat is no criterion of its strength and virtue, but often of its highest success. The principle of perfection grows best apart from observation and human approval; striking deeper and stronger roots in the obscure places of life where its tender hidden growths of virtue and well-doing thrive most. True, these are conditions of life and growth that are an eternal contradiction to the popular idea of righteousness; a rebuke to the world's standards of success. Yet the Pharisee is the failure of the ages through his one great ghastly success of old. The history of the human race shows no one to be more terribly, eternally, and hopelessly in the wrong than he; while even materially considered, history proves no man's mission to have been a greater success through defeat than Christ's.

"Indeed, what of the world and its victories? Men speak too much about the world. Each one of us here, let the world go how it will, and be victorious or not victorious, has he not a life of his own to lead? *One life*; a little gleam of time between two eternities; no second chance to us forever more. . . . The world's being saved will not save us; nor the world's being lost destroy us. We should look to ourselves: there is

great merit here in staying at home. And on the whole, to say truth, I never heard of worlds being saved in any other way. That mania of saving worlds is itself a piece of this century with its windy sentimentalism. Let us not follow it too far. For the saving of the *world* I will trust confidently to the Maker of the world; and look a little to my own saving, which I am more competent to!"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Heroes and Hero Worship*, Lecture V.

# THE PROFIT OF LOVE

## I

### THE PERFECT WAY

#### THE GOAL

Walk before Me, and be perfect. — Gen. 17: 1.

THERE can be but three states in the earthly life of the spirit, equilibrium, progress, and deterioration. The ordinary conception of the different states of the soul is that it may be in a bad, good, or better state. A soul that has set out seriously to reach perfection cannot accept with contentment this ordinary classification of its different states. A state of simple goodness would be far more difficult for it to sustain than the most strenuous activity towards perfection. There is too thin a wall at the line of division between good and bad for the soul to lean with security upon it for permanent support against the swift descent on the other side. Climbing upwards, no matter how difficult and slow, is security itself compared to so precarious a position. Once the ascent begins there remain for the soul only the alternate states of progress or deterioration. "As long as you are pilgrims in this life you are capable of growth, and he who does not go forward, by that very fact is turning back."<sup>1</sup> To

<sup>1</sup> *St. Catherine of Siena. Dialogues*, p. 209.

attain equilibrium only, to remain half-way up to the top, would be no better than to remain at the bottom, where the results of a fatal fall would not be one half as great.

But it is half-way up the heights that so many pause, filled with as vague a terror of the altitudes above as of the depths below. The sight of these alternatives is more than they can bear, so they close their eyes to both of them, and perilously cling to the foothold they have found; losing after awhile all sense of danger below as well as all consciousness of the safety above.

This, the state of equilibrium, is what the state of contentment with mere goodness is in the spiritual life. It is a temporizing with the safety of one's soul. Out of it grow the timidity, the inertia, the dullness and stupidity in many of the forms of the Christian life which every day and every hour are disappointing us by their contradiction of the true Christian ideal.

But it is towards this bare foothold of precarious safety only that Christians are urged most constantly and most eloquently by those who preach goodness alone as the state to be aimed at in the Christian life. This is the level upon which souls seeking perfection are usually met when they begin to strive for the upper heights of the spirit. It is this level which is the acknowledged standard of safety. All below it is dangerous; all above it is admirable, — but not necessary for salvation. This view of its position on the upward road to perfection puts a heavy stumbling block in the way of the soul whose gaze is fixed on the almost in-

accessible heights above, the attainment of which it knows is its only goal. For it, safety lies at no point short of their summit. To others these heights are not revealed; the point to which their vision reaches is fixed far below them. This is the goal to them, unsuspecting as they are of the great distances beyond. The differences between their view and that of the soul speeding by the road of perfection is that the latter sees the true goal ahead of it the whole way, while they see no farther than the point at which they have arrived. They receive no stimulus to further effort by looking at the danger down below, and no inspiration by gazing upward to the heights whereon their only safety lies. They have arrived at a point which *feels* safe and they close their eyes with a vague sense of security and the hope that the distance between them and the end is in some way to be annihilated, without any effort on their part, through the transition from life to death. The actual process by which this is to be accomplished they feel no responsibility about, it is no concern of theirs. There are the Church and the Sacraments for the final emergency. Death evens it all up and Purgatory completes the transformation.

This state of mind is systematically developed among Christians by preaching safety only as the goal to be aimed at in the saving of their souls. Salvation after awhile comes to mean mere safety; and later on this sense of safety settles down into stolid contentment with whatever security may be had against final reprobation by the aid of Church and Sacraments.

Upon the mere footholds set by grace about their feet to lead them ever upwards towards their true and only goal the great mass of souls clings inert, content with a security that purchases salvation at so small a cost.

In preaching safety only as the goal of salvation a motive has been proposed to Christians for the attainment of eternal life that would not be sufficient as a motive for the support or continuance of even their natural existence. "It was not enough for Nature to equip him (man) with a body, and plant his foot on the lowest rung of the ladder. She must introduce into her economy some great principle which should secure, not for him alone, but for every living thing, that they should work upward to the top. The inertia of things is such that without compulsion they will never move. And so admirably has this compulsion been applied that its forces are hidden in the very nature of life itself — the very act of living contains within it the principles of progress. An animal cannot *be* without *becoming*." <sup>1</sup>

To afford this irresistible compulsion towards the true goal of every immortal soul, a principle no less wise and beneficent was set by the Divine Hand in the scheme of eternal salvation. This principle lies at the bottom of the human soul's inexorable discontent with the whole sum of finite good, and its inveterate longing for something ever just beyond its reach. Deep in the soil of this discontent is planted in every redeemed soul the tiny seed of the principle of perfection, whose

<sup>1</sup> *Ascent of Man*, p. 190.



promise and fruition is the infinite satisfaction of all its finite desires when the goal of its mortal life is reached.<sup>1</sup>

To propose a lower standard than personal perfection as the condition of salvation is to lead the soul blindfold to the gateway of its eternal destiny, and leave it there to face alone and unprepared that poignant realization of its own insufficiency, when at last the vision of Infinite Perfection breaks upon it, which is itself the most searching fire of the spirit's final purification, —

“And these two pains, so counter and so keen, —  
The longing for Him when thou seest Him not,  
The shame of self at thought of seeing Him —  
Shall be thy veriest, sharpest purgatory.”<sup>2</sup>

Souls are inherently only too willing to be thus led, to hand over to others the responsibility of their personal salvation, to seize any guarantee offered them of a maximum reward for a minimum of effort; and it is this disposition of weakness in them that is made most profit of by those false leaders who are feeding that perverted zeal for organization in everything pertaining to religious interests which is one of the most serious obstacles of our day towards true spiritual development.

<sup>1</sup> “On its negative side it might be described as a sense of incurable dissatisfaction with anything that is finite and external, with the uttermost conceivable extension of good; . . . on its positive side, a felt attraction towards that which, like some dark star, is the source of all our perturbation, restlessness, and discontent; towards that which is given to our consciousness only in this very feeling of inexplicable hunger.”  
— *Lex Orandi*, Intro., p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> The *Dream of Gerontius*.

The present tendency to conceal personal deficiency and individual weakness by taking refuge in corporate power and confederated strength is a tendency which runs exactly counter, both by policy and principle, to all true and honest growth in the individual.

The zeal of our age spends itself in useless efforts to bring up the great mass of souls to one general level of well being and righteousness — it is the dream of the socialist, as well as of the evangelist — and the individual aspiration towards a higher goal than this must make way for the march of the crowd towards the millennium — wherever that may be.<sup>1</sup> “Our whole organization to-day is toward the submerging of the individual, but the most tremendous revolution that ever entered the world was brought about by an Individual who was profoundly indifferent to the mechanism of organization.”

To unnerve the force of the soul's vital principle of growth by lessening the sense of its personal responsibility for its own salvation, is to put a fearful handicap upon its progress towards that perfection which is the absolute and final condition for its eternal salvation. To palliate the terms of this condition by offering “short cuts,” “easy methods,” and all the other kinds of anæsthetics kept in stock by the spirit of expediency

<sup>1</sup> “I for my part cannot but consider the talk of the contemporary sociological school about averages and general laws and predetermined tendencies, with its obligatory undervaluing of the importance of individual differences as the most pernicious and immoral of fatalisms. Suppose there is a social equilibrium fated to be, whose is it to be, — that of your preference, or mine? There lies the question of questions, and it is one which no study of averages can decide.” — Professor Wm. James. *The Will to Believe*, p. 261.

and compromise is for the most part only preparing unconscious souls for that last and terrible operation by which Purgatory's cleansing fires exact tribute to perfection even unto the last farthing.

"The very act of living contains within it the principle of progress." The soul's inveterate longing for the unattainable contains the vital principle of spiritual growth; and to check or stultify that growth by preaching and approving only inferior motives and safeguard measures for salvation systematically cultivates that apathetic condition in souls which is the despair of the Christian system and the most powerful obstacle in the way of Christian success. Apathy in the physical being is usually a symptom of invalidism, of low vitality or loss of nervous energy; and it is exactly this in the spiritual constitution. When we check growth in a soul by taking away the strongest stimulus to growth, — which is that nothing less than Divine discontent with what it has attained, — we have made another invalid to add the dead weight of his inertia to the Christian system; and all further use of the agencies of that system must be towards safeguarding him from the rude shocks of an ungodly world rather than towards strengthening him for the overcoming of that world. The Christian life was never meant to be only a series of escapes from danger; nor shall we by the mere accident of such escape ever come into our kingdom. "*He that shall overcome, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God; . . . and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my GOD,*

*the new Jerusalem.*<sup>1</sup> *He that shall overcome shall inherit all things.*<sup>2</sup> To him that *thirsteth*, I will give of the fountain of the water of life, freely.”<sup>3</sup>

Let us strengthen our realization of these things by borrowing from their analogy to the facts of our human existence. “Will not everyone instantly declare a world fitted only for fair-weather beings, susceptible of every passive enjoyment, but without independence, courage, or fortitude, to be from a moral point of view incommensurably inferior to a world framed to elicit from man every form of triumphant endurance and moral energy?”<sup>4</sup> “No philosophy will permanently be deemed rational by all men which (in addition to meeting logical demands) does not . . . in a still greater degree make a direct appeal to all those powers of our nature which we hold in highest esteem.”<sup>5</sup>

It is the exorbitant demand made upon the human soul by the call to perfection, — *Be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect* — that constitutes its most irresistible attraction to those who feel most keenly the mysterious impulse of the soul's best powers

<sup>1</sup> Apoc. 3: 12.

<sup>2</sup> 21: 6.

<sup>3</sup> 21: 7.

<sup>4</sup> Professor Wm. James. *The Will to Believe*; The Sentiment of Rationality.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

“The struggle for life is a species of necessitated aspiration, *the vis a tergo* which keeps living things in motion. It does not follow, of course, that that motion should be upward; that is dependent on other considerations. But the point to mark is that without the struggle for food and the pressure of want, without the conflict with foes and the challenge of climate, the world would be left to stagnation. Change, adventure, temptation, vicissitude even to the verge of calamity, these are the life of the world. — *Ascent of Man*, p. 206.

towards the unattainable; and who give rein to this impulse by a response to the call of perfection.

“At the appeal of holiness the divine witness within us at once responds; and so we see, streaming from all points of the horizon to gather round those who preach in the name of this inward voice, long processions of souls athirst for the ideal. The human heart so naturally yearns to offer itself up, that we have only to meet along our pathway some one who, doubting neither himself nor us, demands it without reserve, and we yield it to him at once. Reason may understand a partial gift, a transient devotion; the heart knows only the entire sacrifice.”<sup>1</sup>

The “appeal of holiness” is, then, religion’s last and most persuasive word to humanity. No other appeal than this contains the declaration of religion’s true mission to the world; and by the response that humanity makes to this appeal must the measure of religion’s success be taken. Neither can religion by taking thought of her growth in numbers, in power, in wisdom, and in all great things as the world reckons greatness, add one foot to her stature, if, step by step with such growth as this, her children have not climbed upward on that holy mountain, where “only he shall ascend *that walketh without blemish . . . and that speaketh truth in his heart.*”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Life of St. Francis.* Sabbatier; p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. 14.

## II

### THE CALL OF THE PERFECT

My elect, I have even called thee by thy name. — Is. 45: 4.

#### THE OBJECT

As the different states of the individual soul are ordinarily put into three categories, bad, good, and better; so is the mass of human beings ordinarily classified under the same three headings. As the whole system of sacraments and grace is directed towards lifting the soul out of the state of reprobation into the at least primary condition for salvation, so is the whole scheme of Christian effort engaged upon the one supreme task of urging the bad up into the state of the good. The desideratum of all Christian ambition seems to be the accomplishment of this task; let it only succeed in levelling humanity up to this standard and the salvation of the race is accomplished. The small class of souls who would choose a standard higher than this must be set apart from the rest as beings of another order, demanding separate and peculiar conditions of their own, conditions that must differentiate them still more than they inherently are already from the other two classes of the good and the bad.

The precedent for setting apart that small number

of souls who have chosen the better way is based upon the Gospel teaching of counsel and precept. Narrowly construed, the common interpretation of this teaching is that to choose to live by precept exempts a soul from living by counsel; and that a "call" to live by the counsels essentially differentiates a soul, both in the motive and the condition of its life, from those who live by precept only. This arbitrary classification of the life of counsel and the life of precept has created some strange misapprehensions in regard to the essential character of a call to the perfect life.

While the mystery of the Divine election of souls may never be apprehended by human intelligence, the singular Providence which ordained that it should remain a mystery must be clearly apparent to us. If this mystery forever prohibits us from knowing why there are a few chosen of God, it likewise leaves us in doubt as to who these chosen ones are; and it is this doubt which places us under the peculiar obligation of aiming at nothing less than the highest point of perfection of which we are individually capable. Even St. Paul, who could surely claim some proof of the certainty of his own election, pursued no other method of attaining to it than this. *Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended. But one thing I do: forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth myself to those that are before, I press towards the mark, to the prize of the supernal vocation of God.*<sup>1</sup>

But has no sign been given to us whereby we may

<sup>1</sup> Phil. 3: 13, 14.

know the measure of our own capacity for fulfilling the obligations of this unfathomable mystery? There is a sign so simple that none may miss the meaning of it, once the answer has been given to this question; yet each must seek his own answer, for none can interpret the terms of that answer to another. In one of those old-fashioned novels of the last generation that were designed as a religious treatise, though framed as a story, the heroine asks, "What is a religious vocation?" and the reply given to this question by the author contains a unique and illuminating definition of the character, condition, and aim of the perfect life. The sense of the definition is this: The sign of a religious vocation is a *precocious* conviction that God only is the supreme good now and forever; a conviction so overmastering once it has taken hold of the intellect and will of any soul that nothing in this world can stand in the way of its impetuous desire to reach this Supreme Good over the shortest road that may be taken to it.

No human soul was ever born to whom this conviction that God is the Supreme Good was not destined to come as the climax of all its knowledge and experience either in this world or the next. But the difference in souls is marked by the period of time it takes in the life of each for this conviction to come home to it. It is this varying period of time which makes the difference between the reprobate and the saint, between the saved and the lost. Some fill the measure of human experience to the brim, taste all earthly joys, test every



human possibility for finding a supreme good less than God, and then accept this conviction in the end, perhaps only out of the desperation of their disappointment with all things else under the sun.

“As the pleasure seeker may at last make experimental proof of the worthlessness of his ends and turn from the life of sense to the life of spirit; so to the idealist there often comes a day when the thought of the finitude of even his most spiritual aims creeps over him like a black cloud, ‘a dark night of the soul,’ filling him with weariness and ennui. Vanity of vanities is the verdict of the higher no less than of the lower experience of life. That we are dissatisfied, not only with what the Ideal gives us, but, by anticipation, with all it could ever possibly give us, is proof that there is a higher love-power within us which must seek its object elsewhere.” — *Lex Orandi*, p. 16, Introduction.

Still further beyond these are those to whom this conviction never comes within the period of their earthly experience, who do not accept its awful reality till the judgment of their denial, or rejection, or forgetfulness of it breaks upon their immortal souls at the end of their mortal career.

Yet neither by experience or knowledge or judgment does it come to some; through no human medium does it seem to conduct the mysterious force of its overmastering conviction to the heart and mind of a few chosen ones. To others — perhaps to them — it seems to have come out of time, and in its strange demands upon the soul of its election, out of order too. It is out of time. The strength of this conviction in

them belongs to eternity, it anticipates the realities of eternity to the soul which is seized by it. It is *precocious* in its knowledge of the worthlessness of the things of time, the unreality of all good less than God. No human experience may as yet have taught it this supreme truth; but its conviction of it is so fixed and so overmastering that no test of it by human experience could increase or change it. It is as though sometime upon its soul's inward vision there had flashed a momentary glimpse of its immortal life and the supreme preoccupation of that life with eternity's great reality, the vision of God's face. His face it did not see, but, like *Moses hid in the cleft of the rock, it saw His glory as He passed by*.<sup>1</sup> Since that hour its life has been a quest for the recovery and possession of this lost vision, — *I will rise, and I will go about the city: in the streets and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth*; <sup>2</sup> — an inveterate longing to behold the face of Him whose very shadow ravished it with such incurable desire, — *My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hollow places of the wall, shew me thy face, let thy voice sound in my ears; for thy voice is sweet, and thy face comely*.<sup>3</sup>

This vision, or intuition of the vision, has once for all fixed its standard of value upon the things of time as against those of eternity. It may repudiate the standard; but it can never obliterate the vision — though it may reject it. This is why unfaithfulness to a religious call is so awful a treachery; this is why,

<sup>1</sup> Ex. 33: 22.

<sup>2</sup> Cant. of Cant. 3: 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 2: 14.

*when a man puts his hand to the plough, he may not look back*, — he may never take up again, except consciously and deliberately, the lesser for the greater good. There is really no such thing as *losing* a vocation, — the vision of the greater good, the better part, has been given to such souls, and it is unforgettable, — but there is sometimes the wilful rejection of the standard fixed by this vision upon this world's values, and a deliberate choice of those values for the greater ones of eternity. The common misapprehension is that a rejection of conventual or monastic life for a life in the world means "losing" a religious vocation. There can be no loss of a religious vocation without the deliberate choice of the temporal for the eternal, without the rejection of the greater for the lesser good; and it may sometimes happen that one who prefers a life in the world to a life in the cloister, by that very preference may have rejected what to him personally would have meant a life of lower religious ideals and less self-sacrifice than he would be free to choose for himself in the world.

Through the irresistible and traditional association of spiritual perfection with religious life as exemplified only in the cloister, we have confused the true and essential meaning of the religious vocation with a system which was designed merely to afford the best conditions for the protection and development of that vocation. A monastic life in its very best interpretation cannot mean more than this. It neither creates nor bestows a religious vocation, — neither can it by

its own rejection deprive a soul of the privilege of Divine election: *That which my Father has given Me, is greater than all: and no one can snatch them out of the hand of my Father;*<sup>1</sup> — it simply affords the most favourable conditions for the best development of such a vocation among certain classes of souls. If these conditions prove unfavourable to certain other classes or types of souls who manifest the unmistakable signs of a religious calling, the lack cannot be said to exist in the souls but in the conditions. Other conditions in other conventual systems may prove more favourable; or it is even conceivable that no conditions or systems have been as yet devised or created to suit the peculiar characteristics of such types of religious vocation. Such things have happened before. There were certainly numberless souls called to the perfect life ages before conventual systems were ever dreamed of. That they did not fulfil the obligations of such a calling in exactly the same conditions as were provided for religious vocations of a later period does not prove that such vocations did not exist in their time; and indisputably proves that what is ordinarily called the religious vocation is a state of soul that is peculiar to no period of time, or place, or condition.

Let us clarify our understanding of this fact by referring to some definitions of the perfect life and the conditions for that life written centuries ago by a monk, who is not only an honoured authority in his own Order of St. Benedict, but held in high esteem by the Church

<sup>1</sup> John 10-29.

as a master in spiritual science, Ven. Augustine Baker, (1575-1641). In the opening chapter of his treatise on the perfect life he thus teaches the "obligation upon all Christians to aspire to perfection in divine love by the ways of prayer."

"Our duty therefore in our present state, and the employment of our whole lives, must be constantly and fervently to co-operate with divine grace . . . but also not to content ourselves with any limited degrees of piety and holiness, but daily to aspire . . . to the *same perfection for which we were first created*, and which was practised by Adam in innocence; to wit . . . a continual uninterrupted union in spirit with God."

"This, I say, is the duty and *indispensable obligation of all Christians*, of what condition soever, not only to aspire to divine love, but also to the perfection thereof suitably to their several states and vocations, for it is morally impossible for a soul . . . loving God deliberately and habitually . . . to stop in any inferior degree of love to Him. The frailty of nature may . . . hinder most souls from attaining such perfection . . . and union with God . . . but nothing but the want of true love will hinder the aspiring thereto, according to the measure and strength that each soul in her order enjoys." <sup>1</sup>

It should be noted that the author of this teaching has started with the premise that the perfect life is fully and unconditionally defined in the terms, "perfect union with God"; — and no one has ever author-

<sup>1</sup> *Sancta Sophia*, Treatise 1, Sect. 1, Chap. 1, §§ 4, 10, 11.

itatively improved upon that definition — “What is it therefore that a soul truly called by God to enter religion looks for? Surely not corporal labours, not the use of Sacraments; nor hearing sermons, etc. For all these she might have enjoyed more plentifully in the world. It is, therefore, only the union of the spirit with God by recollected, constant prayer, to the attaining of which divine end all things practised in religion do dispose.”<sup>1</sup> . . . To gain this happy state a . . . soul enters into religion, where all imaginable advantages are to be found for this end — at least anciently they were so, and still ought to be.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Sect. 3, Chap. 4, § 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, § 8.

A curious contrast between the primary notions of the perfect life, held by ordinary Christians in general to-day and those of the fourteenth century, is pointed out by Father Dalgairns of the Oratory in his essay on *The Spiritual Life of Mediæval England*, which prefaces Walter Hilton's “*Scale of Perfection*,” a treatise on the perfect life written about two centuries before Father Baker's. “It tells much for the spiritual life of England that in the fourteenth century such a treatise as the ‘*Scale of Perfection*’ should have been written . . . and evidently had a wide circulation. The number of existing manuscripts scattered through various cathedral and other libraries bear witness to its popularity. It was high in repute with the Carthusians, and this in itself is a guarantee of its being extensively read. No order was so respected in England and other Teutonic countries as the Carthusian. . . . One of their especial employments was the translation and propagation of good spiritual books. . . . The art of printing was as yet in its infancy when the ‘*Scale of Perfection*’ was at once printed in black letter by Wynkyn de Worde, and other editions rapidly appeared. This, then, is the remarkable fate of this book. A treatise on the spiritual life, originally written by an obscure author in a small house of Augustinian Canons in Nottinghamshire, and addressed to the most solitary of all the varieties of monastic life, is chosen to be the guide of good Christians in the courts of kings and in the world. Throughout the dismal wars of the Roses, and the more dismal reign of Henry VIII, many a heart was strengthened and consoled by Walter

With this definition clearly stated he takes up the consideration of the different conditions in which this union may be realized; though never, throughout a long series of chapters in which he analyzes and weighs every possible circumstance and quality of perfection, does he confound mere conditions for progress in perfection with perfection itself. Very carefully does he correct misapprehension on this point: "Although all Christians are obliged to aspire to perfection, and to lead spiritual lives . . . yet the effectual practice of this obligation is so very rare that in ordinary speech those only are said to aspire to perfection who have been called by God from all solicitous engagement in worldly affairs . . . and this most ordinarily and perfectly in a religious profession, or if in the world, yet in a course of life divided from and separated from the world." <sup>1</sup> Herein he makes it plain that the ad-

Hilton. . . . Now, all this is very worthy of remark. Here is a book written for a recluse, yet printed and recommended as a book of devotion, not for the cloister, but for good Christians in the world."

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Chap. 2, § 1.

In emphasizing the difference between the two conditions, and the obligations of the one above the other, Father Baker borrows a description from an ancient author which is almost of as much interest on account of its quaint originality as for its homely truthfulness.

"St. Paulinus excellently illustrates this truth by this similitude. He compares the world to a dry, scorched, and barren wilderness, and celestial happiness to a most delicious paradise, divided from this desert by a deep and tempestuous river, which must necessarily be passed by swimming. The securest way to pass over this river is by quitting one's clothes; but few there are that have the courage to expose themselves to the injuries of the weather for a while, and therefore adventure over clothes and all; and of them, God knows, a world miscarry by the way. Some few others (such are religious persons), seeing this danger . . . divest themselves of their clothes, and make themselves lighter and nimbler by casting



vantage of a religious profession consists ("most ordinarily") in its being "a state of competent abstraction," and freedom from "all solicitous engagement in worldly affairs, so as to make the only employment . . . the serving, adoring, loving, meditating, and praying unto God, etc."; and he differentiates the advantage of a perfect life in the world in no respect whatever from that in a religious profession, if these same conditions are provided. "Not by the mere taking a religious profession or habit a person is thereby more perfect than he was before, but because by renouncing those distractive impediments which are in the world he puts himself into a condition in which he not only may far more easily aspire to the perfection of divine love, but moreover, by assuming such a state, he obliges himself . . . to approach nearer to this perfection daily." <sup>1</sup>

In whatever way the distinction and the difference between the conventual and the non-conventual state of perfection is defined, the superiority of the one over the other lies wholly in the advantage which the external conditions of one may provide over the other

away all impediments, how dear soever to flesh and blood. But yet, this being done, it remains that they should labour, naked, as they are, with swimming, to pass the river. But this they neglect to do, or take so little pains or strive so negligently against waves and stream, that all they do comes to nothing, they are in as much danger and as far from paradise as before. And whereas they glorify themselves because they are naked; that will rather aggravate their folly and make their negligence far more culpable, in that, having so great an advantage, they would not take a little pains to do that for which they cast off their clothes."—*Ibid.*, Treatise 1, Sect. 3, Chap. 5, § 3.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Treatise 1, Sect. 3, Chap. 5, § 2.



for greater freedom and facility in the soul's approach to God; and not in any inherent and essential difference between the perfection of the two states.

The attainment of our personal perfection, then, rests not upon our solving the doubt of our own special "call" or election to the life of the perfect; nor upon our choice of peculiar circumstances and prepared conditions in which to work out the obligations of the perfect life. When we challenge the answer to our personal problem of salvation we have put ourselves on trial, and our question can be solved only within the depths of our own hidden consciousness where we test our willingness to accept the terms upon which we may purchase *the pearl of great price*. "The solving word, for the learned and unlearned man alike, lies in the last resort in the dumb willingness and unwillingness of their interior characters, and nowhere else." "*It is not in heaven, neither is it beyond the sea; but the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.*"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Deut. 30: 12-14.

### III

#### SOULS NOT SYSTEMS

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. — 2 Cor. 3-17.

#### THE MOTIVE

THERE is but one obstacle recognized by all authorities on spiritual science as the most effectual check on the soul's progress towards perfection; and this is the substitution of any other object than the legitimate One as the motive of the perfect life. This may sound trite; but it is used with peculiar significance by the author of the treatise on perfection, heretofore quoted, in pointing out some of the common delusions of those who aim at *methods* of perfection while overlooking the essential motive of it. "No wonder is it if so very few, even of those whose profession it is to aspire thereunto (to perfection), do attain unto this end, partly out of ignorance and error, whilst they place perfection in an exact performance of outward observances and austerities. . . . Most certain it is that, if in and for themselves alone and without any interior direction for the purifying of the soul they be esteemed and performed as parts of real perfection, and not chiefly as helps of internal devotion and purity, they will

rather become hindrances to contemplation,<sup>1</sup> nourishing pride, contempt of others, etc., and be the ruin of true charity.”<sup>2</sup>

The primary function of any system is to reduce the varied elements it contains to a state of as nearly uniform simplicity as their differences will permit. This simplicity conduces more than anything else to insure the continuous success of the system. The tendency of the latter, therefore, is inevitably towards enforcing the letter rather than the spirit. The spirit is diverse, subtle, mutable in its interpretations of the letter, according to times, places, and circumstances; constantly “renewing,” “quickenings,” “creating” new forms and conditions, and rejecting the old ones as soon as these decay and settle into the rigidity of death. All this disrupts, disturbs, breaks up uniformity, and directly antagonizes the *literal* meaning of the law. It is an eternal conflict, and an unequal one. There is no permanent triumph for the spirit — though there is an ultimate one. *The letter killeth, the spirit giveth*

<sup>1</sup>The word “contemplation” is used here and throughout this treatise, not in any restricted sense, but as meaning the “prayer of the perfect” — as this author elsewhere calls it, — “the beginning and imperfect practice of that which shall be our eternal employment in Heaven”; yet by no means the “prayer of the perfect” as that might be commonly understood, for, as he explains, “experience demonstrates that all the most sublime exercises of contemplation may as purely and perfectly be performed by persons the most ignorant and unlearned . . . as by the learnedst doctors, inasmuch as not any abilities in the brain are requisite thereto, but only a strong courageous affection of the heart . . . the perfection of contemplation . . . consists in the fervour and constancy of the will united to God, and scarce at all in operations of the understanding.” — *Sancta Sophia*, Chap. 3, § 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Treatise 1, Sect. 1, Chap. 4, §§ 11, 16.

*life*. Literalness is the backbone of law, and the simpler the mind the more literal is its interpretation of that law. The result of such literalness is to reduce more and more to a state of mechanical action that free and continuous choice of the will which makes the soul's election of good of such inestimable value: The choice being made once for all, and secured by hard and fast obligations, the freedom to perpetuate the act of choosing is no longer a real one, and the performance of it must become a formalism. "It is one of the tritest of truisms that human intelligences of a simple order are very literal. They are slaves of habit, doing what they have been taught without variation; dry, prosaic, and matter-of-fact in their remarks; devoid of humour, except of the coarse physical kind which rejoices in a practical joke; taking the world for granted; and possessing in their faithfulness and honesty the single gift by which they are sometimes able to warm us into admiration."

"But even this faithfulness seems to have a sort of inorganic ring, and to remind us more of the immutable properties of a piece of inanimate matter than of the steadfastness of a human will capable of alternate choice." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Professor Wm. James. *The Will to Believe: Great Men and their Environment*.

"The . . . quality we are to look for in the soul is mouldableness, plasticity. Conformity demands conformability. Now plasticity is not only a marked characteristic of all forms of life, but in a special sense of the highest forms. It increases steadily as we rise in the scale. The inorganic world, to begin with, is rigid. . . . The animal in all its parts is mobile, sensitive, free; the highest animal, man, is the most mobile,

When the passion for individual perfection becomes diverted into zeal for the perfection of the system or the conditions which were originally designed only to serve for the perfect development of the individual, the real meaning of perfection is lost. The vocation becomes only an attribute of the system, instead of the latter being merely an aid to the best development of the former; it is then a state of life rather than a state of soul; and what contributes towards perfecting this state of life, rather than what develops the capacity of the individual soul to live the life, becomes the important business of the system. There is then so much solicitude about the *state* of life that the life itself becomes obscured; its glorious realities and possibilities are relegated to secondary consideration; the primary aim being to perfect the state itself; to contribute one's individual example, in the practices of rule and observance, to build up this splendid and imposing "organized state of perfection." — "Organic unity, like the idea which informs it, is necessarily of the individual. For ideas are of the individual."<sup>1</sup>

The ideal of the organized religious state is of course the most at leisure from routine, the most impressionable, the most open for change. And when we reach the mind and soul, this mobility is found in its most developed form. Whether we regard its susceptibility to impressions, its lightning-like response even to influences the most impalpable and subtle, its power of instantaneous adjustment, or whether we regard the delicacy and variety of its moods, or its vast powers of growth, we are forced to recognize in *this* the *most perfect capacity for change*. This marvellous plasticity of mind contains at once the possibility and prophecy of its transformation." — *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, p. 269.

<sup>1</sup> *Dialogues of St. Catherine*. Preface, p. 3.

to develop perfection in the individual; to make the practices of rule and observance the merely spontaneous expression of that spirit of perfection and fervour which should animate and stimulate each member. This is the ideal aimed at, but almost impossible of realization in human conditions. From the very nature of things the order of this organized state of perfection becomes inverted: The individual contributes towards perfecting the system rather than the system the individual; for the ordinary tendency of one towards perfection is not so strong as the natural development of the other in that direction, this development being constantly stimulated through the growth of the collective experience of its members, and the increasing contributions of individual life to the great life of the system itself. —

“The Individual withers,  
And the World grows more and more.”

With the religious life as an organized state of perfection everywhere manifesting this vigour of growth, and offering such ideal conditions for developing the individual soul along the ways of perfection, the results in individual lives should be remarkable, — at least there should appear contrasts between the results of this higher development of soul and character, and the results of mere ordinary conditions of life in the world, striking enough to be an irresistible demonstration of the value of the one over the other as a condition for perfection. It will not do to say that these results do exist among the individuals of the religious system and

not among those outside, but that they are hidden from a world which would know them not, even if they were exhibited to it. A perfect life which is called so only because it is in perfect conformity to the peculiar conditions in which it exists, or to the "spirit of its own order,"<sup>1</sup> and is, in a sense, only a product of those conditions, could not be called a true exemplar of perfection; for the most striking characteristic of perfect souls is their ability to transcend and to be independent of all conditions. Such a type could only serve as a model for those who had adopted or who admired these conditions as the ideal ones for religious perfection. It would be rather an admiration of the conditions than of the end and purpose of these conditions; and such admiration would be no more than a perversion of the true ideal of perfection.

The life of the truly perfect, no matter where it exists, must win admiration for its own inherent qualities alone, not for virtues which are creditable only to the peculiar conditions in which it was developed; and which might not be put into the category of virtues at all if the order of these conditions were reversed. Put to its very highest use, any state of life can serve no better purpose than aiding in the development of the principle of perfection in the individual soul; it can

<sup>1</sup> "I must profess that I understand not what is meant by that so-much-talked-of spirit of an order; nor how several orders, though never so much distinguished by habits or certain external practices, if their profession be to tend to contemplation (see note on contemplation, page 39), can have any more than one spirit, which directs them to make their principal design to be the seeking of God." — *Sancta Sophia*, Treatise 1, Sect. II, Chap. 2, § 16.

never be considered as an object in itself, nor as a vocation which in itself is essentially a condition of perfection; no, not if it were made up of the solitude of St. Anthony, the silence of St. Bruno, the austerity and poverty of St. Francis, or the obedience of St. Ignatius.<sup>1</sup>

“It is an illustrious proof of . . . the Divine goodness to all His servants whatsoever that in truth of heart seek Him, that this state of contemplation (being the supremest and most divine that an intellectual soul is capable of in this life or in Heaven also) should neither be enclosed in caverns, rocks, or deserts, nor fixed to solitary religious communities . . . but that the poorest, simplest soul living in the world, and following the common life of good Christians there, . . . may as securely, yea, and sometimes more speedily, arrive to the top of the mountain of vision, than the most learned doctors, the most profoundly wise men, yea, the most abstracted confined hermits.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “How ridiculous would it be for any to boast and say, ‘God be thanked, I have been so many years a professed religious person, in an Order that hath produced so many thousand saints; that hath so many popes; that hath received so many emperors, kings, queens, and princes; that hath so flourished with riches, learning piety,’ etc. As if these good successes to some were sufficient security to all, so that they should need no more than only to be of such an Order.” *Ibid.*, Sect. 3, Chap. 1, § 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Chap. 3, No. 6.



## IV

### THE LIFE OF THE PERFECT

“To pray is not to talke, or thinke, but love.”<sup>1</sup>

#### THE NUN

A VOCATION or “call” to the perfect life, according to the best authorities on the subject, is a spiritual experience in which the soul feels drawn by an extraordinary impulse or desire to “leave all things” to follow Christ. This is the invitation of old: *If thou wilt be perfect sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and come and follow Me.* This “leaving of all things” is understood in this case in the most literal sense — even as they who heard the call of old understood it and gave testimony of it, “*Lo, we have left all things, and have followed Thee;* — and it is carried out literally by leaving “the world,” which is the place of “things,” of mere material goods — riches, honours, and pleasures, which are perishable and transient — for the cloistered world of thoughts, which is the home of the spirit, the kingdom where thoughts, not “things,” constitute the riches or poverty of its subjects. “In this very point lies the difference between a secular and a religious

<sup>1</sup> From some verses written by a Benedictine monk of the seventeenth century, on the picture and writings of the venerable author of *Sancta Sophia*, the principal book of reference used in these chapters.

state, that a secular person, secularly minded, by reason of the noise, tumults, and unavoidable distractions, solitudes, and temptations which are in the world, cannot without much ado find leisure to attend unto God and the gaining of His love for a few minutes every day, or little oftener than the laws of the Church necessarily oblige him. . . . Whereas, a religious person professes his only business to be attending to God's internal voice, for which purpose he renounceth all these impediments and distractions." <sup>1</sup> Its supreme test of perfection is the soul's separation or detachment from all that makes up the sum of mere physical existence. Its mission to the world is to point the way, by the grace of its inner vision, to that "far spiritual city," whose glory comes and goes amid the dreams and longings, the disillusiones and the failures, of this life's quest for good. As the haunting light of the "Holy Grail" was seen by the errant knights of old, "according to their sight," so is the vision of perfect good revealed to the soul according to the measure of its own personal valuation of good, or the strength of its attachment to all things which are less than this good.

Even ethically considered, it is a beautiful thing to have in the midst of this commonplace world of material ambitions and unspiritual, if not immoral, standards a little group here and there who give the brave challenge by lives consecrated to holiness and good works in solemn ceremony, and many an outward symbol, to all that this world holds to be worth while: riches

<sup>1</sup> *Sancta Sophia*. Treatise 1, Sect. 2, Chap. 5, § 4.

and luxury, pleasure and power, and all that may be attained within the narrow span of life lived only in the senses. And socially considered too, the saving influence of the objective and positive contradiction to the ever downward tendencies of this world's standards of good that is offered by any life lived above the senses is of incalculable value. To make this contradiction more explicit and emphatic, according as the world affronts and denies the standards of the Gospel, must surely be the desire of all enlightened Christian souls.

“While humanity remains human, the heroic expression of religion will take captive the choicest spirits. While the divine spark lurks in the heart of the race, a few of the rarest amongst us will be constrained by some strange superhuman instinct to lay down their lives for the many. By some mystical quality of divine intuition they perceive even in youth that it is not wealth or power or fame or human love which provoke deep and abiding happiness. They are so spiritually constructed that they must move in wider worlds than this. For them the streams of delight run not in the channels of the senses but in the deeper waters of eternal life. . . .

“For some of us it is of little comfort to learn that our country has vastly grown in numbers, that we have increased our army and navy, that we have exported so many bushels of wheat or so many ships have entered the harbour, or that we have spent so much wealth in constructing massive buildings. These things, though fair and excellent, do not directly make for the perfection of the individual. It is the culture of the spiritual sense which lends value and dignity to human

life. It is the interior life which will give heroes, saints, and poets to our young Republic. We need the contemplative life as a protest to our intense and thoughtless activity. We need it as a counter-irritant to the vulgarity and frivolity which is consequent upon our marvellous material prosperity. . . . While men believe that love and hope and strength and joy consist in building, breeding, and possessing the things that are about us, they shall never taste the ecstasy of sacrifice — the subtler bliss of the spirit. The frivolous and the vulgar, and they who feel contentment in being clad in beautiful raiment, or find favour in the elegant chatter of the drawing-room, how can they ever know the meaning of the spiritual life? . . . It is a portent of moral decadence when the meditative spirit dies out from the heart of a nation.”<sup>1</sup>

And yet, though we of this generation are said to be wedded to this world's interests alone, seeking the things that are below, rather than the things that are above, there is a deep undertone of spiritual yearning from human hearts to-day that gives a strong denial to this too common reproach against us. The restraints of externals, the harassing multiplicity of material interests clamouring for our attention, the confining occupations of modern life which so commonly narrow our immediate environment to the small sphere of indoor existence in places where even the sight of the broad heavens and the face of nature become strange to us — all this has driven the spirit of man to desperation in seeking some relief from the pressure of external things upon the consciousness. Not only do the

<sup>1</sup> *The Better Part.* By Rev. Henry E. O'Keefe, C.S.P.

records of crime bear witness to the human spirit's desperate and futile struggle to escape from the consciousness of its own misery in excesses of pleasure and dissipation, which may give at least a temporary, though false, freedom, by producing an artificial state of self-forgetfulness, but daily the tragedy of its despair at finding nothing in a mere material existence to soothe its vital unrest is enacted before us in the miserable death of the suicide.

This same discontent with the obtrusiveness and false importance of external things weighs heavily at times upon the hearts of those who do not base their happiness upon the things of this world, even though they are in the midst of them. Yet, "the very power of creating Heaven in the imagination is to bare one's heart to the coldness of this world; and to see Paradise at a distance is to make the desert in which we are travelling more barren and lonely. . . . As one who loves the sweetness of the open meadow, the solitude of the woods, and the cool music of running brooks, finds the noises and odour and crowding of the city almost intolerable, so those who carry a vision of Heaven in their souls find the unkindness, the tumult, and the hardness of this present world almost unbearable."

However we may name them, whether in praise or scorn, and whatever may be our estimate of their individual qualities — generous or selfish, contemptible or heroic, according as we measure them by material or spiritual standards — these souls belong to "that great company of seekers after light and love in every

generation, who rebel against the hardness and injustice of this world, hate its noise and brutality, its fierce competition, and its stolid indifference to the defeated. . . . They have often fled from it and sought refuge in isolation; they have made homes for themselves in the vast quiet of the Nile valley; they have built monasteries on almost inaccessible heights; they have buried themselves out of sight and sound of the world in all manner of lonely refuges." And there are moments when even the lovers of this world secretly yearn to follow them into their peace and solitude that they too may find rest for their sin-wearied souls. And besides these "chosen few," who have been "called" to a life apart from men, there are "hosts of men and women who go through life with a noble discontent in their hearts, a sense of loneliness and isolation in their souls; they are homesick for a world in which men help instead of smite, bind up instead of wound; who stand ready in all crises to rebuild the fallen; are patient with the weak, love the sinner while they loathe the sin; are kindly in speech because kindly in thought, are indifferent to external conditions because conditions are the happenings of life while the soul is its great and enduring reality; and who are bound together (albeit by no external sign) in a vast conspiracy to cheer, to aid, to give heart and hope, to make the highways of life bloom with spontaneous kindnesses, and to make the lonely world a warm, hospitable home for all who pass this way on the journey of life." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Great Word.* H. W. Mabie.

Such souls as these, dreamers, or idealists, or fanatics as they may be judged by the cold, calculating sophistry of the narrow mind, are the very salt of the earth; and in our own day and generation the saving grace of their high-souled influence upon the present widespread greed and selfishness of society is the one thing above all others upon which we must build our hopes. It is not only within the Church itself that the value and the need of their influence is felt. Even those who reckon by different religious standards than ourselves are conscious of the important role they fill in the awakening and uplifting of society in an age which has gone mad with the glory of mere physical achievement. "If we are to have more action, we must have more devotion. If we are to have the emphasis of the expression of the religious life in the service of man to man, we must not forget the old flame of prayer that went up through the Middle Ages and warmed the hearts of men. There may be *dissipation in good works*, just as in any other way; and people so deplete themselves by doing good works that they cease to have any spiritual power to give out or any freshness or vitality to diffuse. We must keep a zone of silence about our lives. Every one of us needs an hour or two every day by ourselves. We need detachment from men, seclusion from the world. The great things come out of silence, not out of noise; and in this tumultuous age . . . we must hedge ourselves around with a zone of silence or every bit of spiritual power, of religion,



of energy, and of divination of the Prophet will go out of us.”<sup>1</sup>

Under one of the definitions of the *Catholic Dictionary* describing the meaning of monastic or religious life, there is a most significant comment upon the value, even from a social or ethical point of view, of the presence amongst us, in an objective and concrete form, of this idea of a life lived in protest to the standards of this world. “In the Middle Ages, when the power of law was still weak, and society was often agitated by unpunished acts of turbulence and injustice, the sight of the peaceful and orderly life of a monastery, spent in a round of ceaseless prayer, praise, and study, was by the very contrast deeply refreshing and stimulative to the higher characters among the laity.”

Yet the “sweet reasonableness” of the motive for forswearing the world and its ways which impels such spirits to seek solitude and release from earthly care and distraction seems a mere contradiction and madness to many, if not to the greater number of men; even among those who belong to the intellectual elite, like him who “failed to understand how a mountain-monk would positively refuse to go into raptures about crags and peaks, and fix his thoughts on eternity. ‘I didn’t come here to look at mountains,’ was the abrupt answer of the stern monk to the nineteenth-century æsthete. ‘What, then? You must think of something, my shaven friend, or go mad.’ ‘I thought of the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*



ancient days; I had in mind the eternal years,' was the reply. Very profitless employment, certainly, to the eyes of modern wisdom, which believes that 'work is worship,' but that worship is not work. How can it be, when you see no visible results — no piling up of shekels, nor hoisting of sky-scrapers, no hoggish slaughter-houses, nor swinish troughs; only psalms that die out in the midnight darkness, and silent prayer from lonely cell away on that snow-clad mountain summit." <sup>1</sup>

If the mere idealist of nature is incapable of appreciating the glories of the unseen world, as depicted by the spiritual consciousness, there are men so morally debased that, as Newman says, they "cannot enter into the very idea of devotion, and think, for instance, that a life of religious seclusion must be either one of unutterable dreariness or abandoned sensuality, because they know of no exercise of the affections but what is merely human. . . . There are others, who, living in the home of their own selfishness, ridicule as something fanatical and pitiable the self-sacrifice of generous high-mindedness and chivalrous honour. They cannot create images of these things any more than children can, on the contrary, of vice, when they ask who and where the bad men are; for they have no personal memories, and have to content themselves with notions drawn from books of the intercourse of life." <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Under the Cedars and the Stars*, p. 132. By Rev. Canon Sheehan.

<sup>2</sup> *Grammar of Assent*.

Yet, as there always have been, so there always will be amongst us groups of souls who will seek conditions of life — or create them if they do not find them already at hand — in which they may better realize the aspirations of their superior nature toward a higher good than this world knows or understands. This brings us to see that the *raison d'être* of that condition of life known as “the religious state” is to satisfy the aspirations of such souls as these by creating or offering favourable conditions for the best realization of the perfect life. If this “religious state” should, from the error or the exigencies of its surrounding circumstances, deteriorate into a condition of life which no longer afforded to religious souls the most favourable opportunities for cultivating their spiritual nature and realizing their vocation to a perfect life, but rather put a handicap upon the progress of such souls by engaging them so inordinately in occupations of a purely secular character and value that the object of the religious life (which, it cannot be too often repeated, is prayer and contemplation) becomes obscured and even set aside, then, surely, such a “religious state” would have lost the only reason for its existence. That it still professed spiritual standards and proclaimed its only end and object to be the cultivation of the perfect life among its members, would avail little to the spiritual profit and progress of those members if these professions were not *practically* realized, and if it did not actually provide and maintain the best conditions for the highest cultivation of the souls who sought refuge within it.

“A religious state,” says the author of *Sancta Sophia*, “without the practice of pure contemplative prayer, would be no better than a mere outward (worldly) occupation or trade; and if only so considered, it is perhaps less perfect than one exercised in the world, by which much good commodity may be derived to others also.”<sup>1</sup>

Psychologically, the practice of this “pure contemplative prayer” might be described as an absolute occupation of the consciousness with a single idea, to which all other ideas, projected upon the mind either consciously or sub-consciously, are subordinated, directed or merged into, so that they do not disturb in any degree the dominance of this supreme idea in the consciousness. This is the state of mind aimed at by those seeking to realize the perfect life; and the “Idea” to which they strive to direct all the conscious operations of their minds is God.

“It is a state, therefore, of recollectedness and introversion that every one entering religion is to aspire unto; which consists in an habitual disposition of soul, whereby she transcends all creatures and their images, which thereby come to have little or no dominion over her, so that she remains apt for immediate co-operation with God. . . . It is called recollectedness, because the soul in such a state gathers her thoughts, naturally dispersed and fixed with multiplicity upon creatures, and unites them upon God. And it is called introversion because the soul . . . turns all her solitudes inwards to observe defects, wants, or inordinations

<sup>1</sup> *Sancta Sophia*, Treatise 1, Sect. 3, Chap. 4, § 19.

there; . . . and likewise, because the proper seat, the throne and the kingdom where God by His Holy Spirit dwells and reigns, is the purest summit of man's spirit. There it is that the soul most perfectly enjoys and contemplates God, (who) though everywhere, yet is present there after a far more noble manner than in any part of the world besides. . . . *The Kingdom of God is within you*; and therefore it is that religious, solitary, and abstracted souls do endeavour to turn all their thoughts inward, raising them to (*apicem spiritus*) the pure top of the spirit (far above all sensible phantasms or imaginary discoursings, or grosser affections), where God is most perfectly seen and most comfortably enjoyed." <sup>1</sup>

While it might be interesting to analyze this state of consciousness from a psychological standpoint, that is not the one from which we can obtain the best light upon this subject, and it is, therefore, irrelevant here. At the same time, it may be said in passing that the proof from the psychological side as to the compatibility of such a state of mind with perfectly normal human consciousness, and a perfectly natural life, would strongly reinforce the arguments of the most extreme exponents of this practice of "pure contemplative prayer." This state of consciousness is, in fact, a highly cultivated mental condition, brought about with the co-operation of an equally cultivated faculty of the will that keeps the consciousness poised, as it were, upon an eminence in the spiritual being, from which the mind looks down with only a dim, far-sighted gaze upon the world of sense beneath it; and

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, § 6.

from which it is never dragged (once it has attained this eminence) by even the rudest outward or bodily contact with the material world about it.

These are the terms which may describe some of the mental characteristics of this state. There are, however, finer appreciations of its qualities, and deeper intuitions of its real experiences in the view taken of it by the spiritual mind. Such minds recognize the fact that a state of consciousness like this must be produced through some strong, overmastering motive from the moral nature; and their intuitive knowledge of the human heart informs them that the motive of love alone could so dominate all the faculties of being as to make them almost automatic or unconscious slaves, subject to this single impulse of the will toward its one supreme desire.

“The principle of all our actions, both external and internal, and that which both begets and sets on work all other passions, is only love — that is, an internal complacency and inclination to an object from the goodness or beauty which is believed to be in it; which object, if it be absent, the first effect of love is a desire or tendance to it. But if it be present, then the effect of love is joy, rest, and fruition in it. Not only grief and anger, but even hatred itself, is set on work by love; for therefore a person is angry, discontented or displeased, because something comes in the way, hindering him from what he loves; therefore he labours and works all that he does work. So that, according as love is regulated and placed upon a worthy or unworthy object, so is the whole person disposed, according to that saying of St. Augustine: *Non faciunt bonus vel*

*malos mores, nisi boni vel mali amores*; that is 'It is only a good or ill love that makes our actions and conditions to be good or ill.'"<sup>1</sup>

This occupation of the consciousness with a single object is the normal condition of even ordinary souls when love rules the heart and mind. But with such souls it is only a transient state. With more highly gifted spirits it may become a permanent condition. "Mystic authors do teach that the proper end of a contemplative life is the attaining unto an habitual and almost uninterrupted perfect union with God in the supreme point of the spirit; and such an union as gives the soul a fruitive possession of Him, and a real experimental perception of His presence in the depth and centre of the spirit, which is fully possessed and filled with Him alone."<sup>2</sup>

No mere training of the mental processes in the *formal* habit of reverting to one fixed idea in all their operations can produce these effects upon the consciousness; and mere imitation of them is likewise impotent to produce their fruits in the soul; for this fruit of love is born of the living, inward volition of the will in its impulse toward the one supreme object of its desires.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Treatise 2, Sect. 2, Chap. 2, § 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Treatise 1, Sect. 1, Chap. 3, § 6.

<sup>3</sup> "Those that place perfection of religious profession in anything but in the purity and simplicity of spirit, such may call themselves monks or contemplatives, being yet able to show no signs of such profession but the habit, and a certain outward, formal, solemn, and severe comportment, under which may be hidden a most secret and profound self-love and pride. And they may do well to meditate seriously on that memorable saying of Hesychius, a holy, illuminated monk: He that hath renounced

The perfect life, therefore, is a state of consciousness, rather than a code of conduct. The latter may be the outward expression of its inward grace; but it may, too, seem at times an utter contradiction to it. There have been veritable saints more erratic, perverse, and even unbearable in their outward seeming than many a sleek-mannered sinner would ever appear to be. Yet there is a crowning trait in such souls that inevitably reveals their sanctity when the test of it is applied to them. This is their self-forgetfulness, — “that sublime self-forgetfulness of which great souls are capable when the divinest ends of living and the ultimate forms of beauty are revealed to them. . . . The story of the great passion is the story of those who have forgotten themselves and become absorbed in others; not to the extinction but to the fulfilment of personality. . . . Calculation (which is the blight upon this world’s motives), prudence, economy of sacrifice, taking account of cost, are as far removed from love as is policy from honour; they have nothing in common. . . . Love thrives only so long as no records are kept of giving and receiving; when mathematics comes in at the door, love flies out at the window. The lightest breath of

the world, saith he, that is, marriage, possessions, and the like, such an one indeed hath made the exterior man a monk, but not as yet the interior; but he that hath renounced his own thoughts and affections, such an one hath truly made the interior man a monk also; and verily any one that hath never so small desire thereunto may easily make the outward man a monk, but it is a task of no small labour to make the interior man so too. Now a sign of an interior monk, saith he, is the having attained to the dignity of true spiritual prayer.” — *Ibid.*, Treatise 1, Sect. 3, Chap. 3, § 13.



barter blights it; and from every endeavour to bind it with rules, confine it to seasons, and yoke it with prudence, it escapes like a spirit from Heaven eluding earthly devices to snare and detain it.”<sup>1</sup>

Plainly, then, except it might be by miracle, or by some of those extraordinary leaps and bounds with which the saints are, in some cases, said to have attained these heights of spiritual perfection, the pathway to them is by no “short cut.” There can be no such thing as attaining “the perfect life,” as it is here understood, by a quick transition in mere outward form only from a life in the world to a “religious state” in the cloister. Indeed, the venerable author we have been quoting from says not only that the “way to perfection must needs be long and tedious, even to souls well-disposed thereto both by nature and education,” but he explains why this is so by using arguments from the practical side showing that even the very conditions sought by religious souls for the advancement in perfection may sometimes make their progress in the latter more difficult; “and the reason is, because having set themselves to combat corrupt nature in all her perverse, crooked, and impure desires, and being sequestered from the vanities of the world, they find themselves in continual agonies and wrestlings, and want those pleasing diversions, conversations, and recreations with which, whilst they lived a secular life, they could interrupt or put off their melancholic thoughts and unquietness.” “Upon these grounds,”

<sup>1</sup> *The Great Word.*



he continues, "mystic authors do teach that, though it be a very great advantage to a soul to tread in these internal ways from her youth . . . yet she will hardly arrive unto the aforesaid union and experimental perception of God's presence in her till almost a declining age; by reason that though her natural ill inclinations may be mortified in a reasonable perfection before that time, yet till such age there will remain too much vigour in corporal nature, and an unstableness in the inward senses, which will hinder that quietness and composedness of mind necessary to such an union. Whereas some persons of a well-disposed temper and virtuous education have in a few years arrived thereunto, though they did not begin an internal course till their ripe age."<sup>1</sup>

We see, then, that with ordinary souls, no matter how upright and pure their motive, or unmistakable their "call" to the perfect way, it is most commonly a matter of long, slow, tedious mental growth, together with a still more painfully tedious training of the will, before even their natural faculties have made so much as a beginning toward the permanent establishment of that state of consciousness which these ancient ascetics described with so much unction and facility as "the life of pure contemplative prayer." But, while the attainment of this perfect condition for religious souls is usually a long way off to most of them, the process, or method, or way, which will lead them directly to it should be right at hand for all of them. It should be, in a word, merely a matter of time and grace before

<sup>1</sup> *Sancta Sophia*, Treatise 1, Sect. 1, Chap. 4, §§ 9, 12.

they reach this end; and never a question of opportunity or condition with any of them. Their "religious state" should be the guarantee to them that they will reach it in time if they are faithful; and it should be the sure refuge and safeguard to them against whatever encroachments may be made upon their internal lives by the ever-exacting demands of external affairs.<sup>1</sup>

Always throughout the centuries has "the religious state" stood for the protection of the soul's peace and security against the unrighteous demands of an ungodly world; and for that "liberty of spirit" which sets the mind and heart free to satisfy their highest aspirations toward good. Not only does it afford these primary conditions for the soul's advancement in perfection, but, with ancient and hallowed wisdom and experience, it directs the soul's progress therein with a fine particularity and solicitude in regard to each single step taken by it in these difficult and untried pathways of the spirit. As one generation has succeeded another and handed down its sum of experience and knowledge to posterity, so has "the religious state" in the Church been enriched age after age by the accumulated fund of experience and knowledge of the workings of the

<sup>1</sup> "But yet, though *all religious persons* ought to aspire to the perfection of this state, it is really gained by very few in these times; for some, through ignorance or misinstruction by teachers that know no deeper nor a more perfect introversion than into the internal *senses and imagination*: and others, through negligence or else by reason of a voluntary pouring forth (of) their affections and thoughts upon vanities, useless studies, or other sensual entertainments, are never able perfectly to enter into their spirits and to find God there." — *Ibid.*, Treatise 1, Sect. 3, Chap. 4, § 8.

human spirit in every phase and condition through which it may have passed in its strivings after the Unseen. And to-day, it is to such a rich resource as this that the simplest soul, aiming at the perfect life in "the religious state," as established by any one of the "Orders" in the Church, may come for enlightenment and instruction as to the ways and means that have been tested and proved to be the best for the advancement of the soul's welfare.

The thing that might appear the most singular to one who examined the literature of this "religious state," as it has developed century after century in the Church, is that the definitions of its standards of the perfect life remain fixed with an almost inflexible exactitude of terminology, no matter what the time, or place, or circumstances to which these standards are applied. In the code of spiritual principles by which the ancient anchorite in the desert directed his inner consciousness toward union with God may be read essentially the same teaching, in regard to the primary conditions for such a union, as is found in the "Rule" of any religious order to-day which has the sanction of the Church. And yet our age seems to be under a peculiar misapprehension concerning the right definition, or rather, perhaps, the right application of these ancient standards of the perfect life to our own time and conditions. We seem to lack that lively appreciation of the difference between what has come to be called so generally in modern times the "active" as distinguished from the "contemplative" state which

the ancients had no difficulty in defining very clearly.<sup>1</sup> Submitted to their tests, that which we have come to regard as the "active" life as a distinctive religious state in itself would be found to be a mere preliminary or rudimentary stage in the soul's progress toward perfection. To them the "active" life could not be safely lived without the same aim and object that inspired the "contemplative" life, except at that risk of sacrificing the soul's interests to earthly affairs which the soul fled from when it forsook the "things" of this world for the affairs of eternity.<sup>2</sup> Always must the

<sup>1</sup> "It was said before that the general end of man's creation, and which ought to be aspired to by all Christians, and much more by those whose more special profession is to tend to perfection, whether in an active or a contemplative state, is a perfect and constant union in spirit to God by love, which is uninterrupted perfect prayer. But the same end is differently sought and attained by active and by contemplative spirits; for in an active life the union is not so immediate, stable, sublime, and *intime* of the supreme portion of the spirit with God, as it is in a contemplative state. But as the exercise of the active lives are much in the imaginative and discursive faculties of the soul, so is likewise their union. The effects of it are indeed more perceptible, and therefore more apt to cause admiration in others; but withal, being much in sense, it is not so clear nor so peaceful, and by consequence not so stable nor immediate as is that of contemplatives. The charity of actives is strong and vigorous, and the outward effects of it dazzling to the eyes of the beholders, and thereby causing great edification. . . . Whereas the deeds of contemplative souls (except when God by an extraordinary inspiration calls them to exterior employments) are but few, and in appearance but small, and little regarded or esteemed by others. . . . Those that are inexperienced may, and often do, call this a state of idleness and unprofitable cessation, as Martha complained against her sister Mary; but those that have attained to a taste of it know it to be the *business of all businesses*, as St. Bernard calls it. . . . A few such secret and unknown servants of God are the chariots and horsemen, the strength and the bulwarks of the kingdoms and churches where they live." — *Ibid.*, Treatise 1, Sect. 1, Chap. 3, § 4; and Treatise 3, Sect. 4, Chap. 1, § 18.

<sup>2</sup> "He deserves not the name of a religious man, saith Cajetan, no,

active be subservient to and directed wholly by the motives of the contemplative state, according to these venerable exponents of the perfect life; and wherever there is need for the entrenchment of the freedom or exercises of one of them it is seldom that the soul's efforts toward prayer are hindered, but always the body's tendency to activity or occupation that is checked, "for by how much the spirit is more excellent and noble than the body," says Father Baker, "by so much are spiritual exercises more profitable than corporal."

We must not understand by this, however, that bodily activity or occupation is in itself an obstacle to a high cultivation of the spirit; or that even the exercise of the mental faculties upon other subjects than prayer is unfavourable to the practice of the latter. "Indeed, study and reading, used with discretion, . . . may be no inconvenient diversion for a contemplative spirit. . . . And to the end that solitude may in the beginning become less tedious and afterwards delightful, religious persons not only may, but ought to, preserve a con-

nor of a Christian, saith Thaulerus, that doth not every day spend some reasonable space in his interior. . . . Above all things, therefore, superiors ought to allow their subjects a competent time daily for their recollections, which is the food of the soul, and to deny which would be a greater tyranny than to refuse corporal food to slaves after their travail . . . for the want whereof is more harmful to the soul than that of corporal food is to the body. For he that fasts one day, besides the present pain he feels, will the next have a better and more eager appetite; but a soul that through neglect is deprived of her daily food of prayer will the next day have a less stomach and disposition to it, and so in time will come willingly and even with pleasure to starve in spirit." — *Ibid.*, Treatise 1, Sect. 3, Chap. 8, § 14.

venient and discreet liberty of spirit about their employments and entertainments of their minds in private, prudently using a variety of them, changing any one, when it becomes over-burdensome, into another more grateful; sometimes reading, sometimes writing, other times working, often praying, etc.”<sup>1</sup> And we need only to refer to the mediæval standards of learning and culture common among the recluses of that time as evidence of the fact that the life of contemplation was rather helped than hindered by such study. The high degree of spiritual culture attained by some of the recluses of earlier times made them sought by enlightened men as wise counsellors in the ways of the spiritual life. There is, in truth, but one condition which can make any occupation an obstacle to the pursuit of contemplation (which is after all only an anticipation by our human faculties on earth of that state of beatitude in Heaven which every Christian soul desires), and this is when such occupation is itself pursued as a “vocation” rather than an avocation or a mere temporal employment.

The fearful pressure under which modern religious institutions have been placed, first, by the unsympathetic and non-comprehending attitude of a materialistic age toward their aim and character; and secondly, by the exorbitant demands made upon their time and attention in the work of secular studies and teaching, has put them at peculiar disadvantage in the pursuit of that perfection of the inner life to which

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Treatise 2, Sect. 1, Chap. 6, §§ 7-9.

each one of them is consecrated.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, there are many amongst us so unthinking, or so unenlightened, as to imagine that the perfection of these institutes consists more in their efficiency as training schools for teachers than in their conditions for the cultivation of souls.

It is a peculiar commentary upon the character of our age and a revelation of its unspiritual estimate of that higher life of the spirit which has fed the sources of all human idealism in every age, that a "vocation" literally to prayer or contemplation is to-day considered as something exotic in spiritual development, if not altogether abnormal. The ordinary conception of a vocation to the religious life in our time invariably identifies that life with some form of active work of charity besides. "Practical" Christians usually dismiss the mere suggestion of the utility of contemplative orders as unworthy of serious consideration; they can understand and appreciate nuns who "work for their living" like common-sense Christians, but as for those

<sup>1</sup> "Truly, so great harm comes to young religious after a noviceship well spent by being put immediately to schools, and for that purpose dispensed with in a great measure about their monastical duties of prayer, abstraction, silence, etc., that it were very good and fit when persons of tender age come to demand the habit to put them off; and in the first place to inform them well about prayer, and to endeavour to persuade them that *before they undertake a religious state* they should despatch their course of philosophy and divinity, and during such a course to use as much abstraction and recollection as well they can, for which they will find more time than if they had been religious, because they shall not be interrupted by the choir and other regular observances. So that if studies be then a hindrance to prayer, how much more would they be so in case they had been religious? — *Ibid.*, Treatise 1, Sect. 3, Chap. 9, § 9.



who do nothing but pray — they “have no use for them.” Yet even among the lowly and unlearned in past ages, the “business” of religious souls was understood to be prayer before all other occupations; and ordinary Christians in those days hoped to fulfil many of their own spiritual obligations by proxy, as it were, in having communities of souls among them whose whole duty was the cultivation of the spiritual life by prayer and praise. The very term “choir” nun, still in common use among religious orders of women to-day, gives a whole history of the change from ancient to modern conceptions of religious life. While this word is now ordinarily used to designate that number of members in a religious community who are set apart to perform the professional work of the Institute, and who are obliged to recite either in private or in unison with others the stated number of prayers or parts of the “Divine Office,” prescribed by the community rules, as distinct from that number of other members in the same community, usually called “lay” sisters, because they perform the menial or unprofessional offices of the household, the original meaning of “choir” nun meant literally what it said: A choir of nuns singing or chanting in unison and almost continuously during the day, and sometimes at certain hours of the night, those different parts of the “Divine Office” whose Latin terms of division of night-time and day-time into “hours” — Matins, Lauds, Tierce, etc. — are now associated in our minds mostly with classical or poetic language only; but which in the old days were known



almost as familiarly among the people as the clock-numbered hours of the day are to us. This singing or chanting of the Divine Office was the *ordinary* occupation of religious communities in the past. In our time it is the extraordinary occupation of a small number of, to us, still more extraordinary persons who have chosen a life of prayer or religious contemplation as their sole business on earth.

While many influences and circumstances have combined in modern times to change the character and ideals of the "religious state," into at least a different outward form than that by which it was distinguished in earlier times, its inner principles and spirit should remain the same. Yet that the emphasis has been taken off the inner significance and put upon the outward form by ordinary Christians is evidenced in the very terminology they use to denote the change from a life in the world to a life in the convent. "Taking the veil" expresses entirely, perhaps, all that the religious sacrifice has come to mean to the common mind. It is to them the beginning and the end and the full complement of the "religious state."

But no agency has been more active in influencing the character and condition of this state in our time than the modern impulse toward general education.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A conservative count of the nuns, or religious women within convents, in the United States, would probably bring the number up to fifty thousand. This estimate is based upon an enumeration of the members in the different religious communities of women in this country as given in the "Summary of Religious Orders for Women," published in the *Catholic Directory*, and is perhaps below rather than above the true total, for it

And, more than this, the revolutionary changes which have taken place in recent years in educational systems and methods have profoundly influenced the personal lives of religious women engaged in teaching. The old idea of the absolute and continuous ignorance of the nun as to the "wickedness of the world" is giving way before the exigencies in which she is often placed nowadays in confronting some of the problems of this wickedness which come before her in her work of teaching. More and more such work demands a professionally trained knowledge of life that will make her ready at all times to meet, without surprise and shock to spiritual sensibilities, abnormal manifestations of human nature's wickedness and even degeneration. It is a cruel thing to subject the untrained, sensitive consciousness of the young religious mind to those

was taken from the *Directory* of 1904, and does not include the increase since then.

The proportion of these fifty thousand religious women who are engaged in the work of active institutions of charity, such as hospitals, orphanages, reformatories, homes for the aged or helpless, etc., seems to be about one fifth of the whole number; the remaining four fifths, or nearly forty thousand, are school teachers.

While there is some doubt as to the exact number of those whose occupation is altogether school teaching (as many of the teaching communities have their members work interchangeably in schools, hospitals, orphanages, etc.) and those who are wholly engaged in active works of charity, apart from purely educational institutions, the precise number of nuns or religious women in this country who are living in *strictly* cloistered or contemplative communities, and who are not engaged in any outside, active works of charity, can be easily stated. It is just three hundred and fifty-eight, according to the following figures, taken from the *Directory*: Carmelites, seventy-two; Poor Clares, ninety-two; Dominicans (Second Order), one hundred and twenty-two; Nuns of the Precious Blood, seventy-two.

crude revelations of elemental forms of evil and depravity in human nature which even unfortunate children sometimes betray by their moral and physical deformities. But even these things must be faced if the work of teaching the masses is to be undertaken by religious women in the common schools. And to be able to face them aright demands an education in the teacher of a kind that will help her to understand human life in a larger sense than that which her conventional notions of good and evil may have taught her. It must be an education that will make her strong enough "to face the good and evil, and know the difference between them, and what they mean. She shall know that virtue is higher than conventionality, and vice lower than an impropriety. . . . She shall look into the inexorable retributions of the moral law with a wholly and benignant fear." But above all this concern for the efficiency of our religious women as school-teachers we must place the question as to whether such efficiency as we would exact from them would be compatible with the best conditions for their perfection as religious.

## V

### THE PASSION FOR PERFECTION

There is no beauty in Him . . . that we should be desirous of Him.  
— Isa. 53: 2.

#### THE GOD-MAN

BEAUTY is the symbol of physical perfection; Love alone expresses perfection in the soul. Beauty seems created for display; Love flies from discovery as if discovery meant death. Discovered beauty seems to droop with that languor which is the first presage of decay; beauty displayed loses the very charm that made it beauty, for boldness disfigures utterly its claim to perfection and stamps it with a defect which must in time prove its complete undoing.

The fate of such beauty is told under Ezekiel's marvellous figure of the Cedar of Libanus, the symbol of all physical perfection — "with fair branches, and full of leaves, of a high stature, and his top was elevated among the thick boughs. . . . The cedars in the paradise of God were not higher than he, the fir trees did not equal his top, neither were the plane trees to be compared with him for branches: *no tree in the paradise of God was like him in his beauty*; and the prototype of all worldly success and power and greatness, "The waters nourished him, the deep set him up on high, the

streams thereof ran round about his roots, and it sent forth its rivulets to all the trees of the country . . . his branches were multiplied . . . and all the fowls of the air made their nest in his boughs, and all the beasts of the forest brought forth their young under his branches, and the assembly of many nations dwelt under his shadow. And he was most beautiful for his greatness, and for the spreading of his branches: *for his root was near great waters*. . . . And all the trees of pleasure in the paradise of God envied him.”<sup>1</sup>

This is the prophet's symbol of him who from the beginning was the ravisher and destroyer of God's chosen people; the foe against whom were directed those terrible maledictions which rang through the tents and courts and temples of Israel when its people lay prostrate under the spell of his beauty and the thrall of his power. This is the glittering Assyrian, type of all worldly greatness and beauty and power; terrible in the fascination of his falsehood; hideous in his revealed corruption, and pride and weakness;—the historic contradiction to the belief that strength is rooted in physical force, and success is perpetuated by success. Him did God use as the very “rod and staff of his anger,” to teach Irsael the folly of such belief and to show it the terrible defeat that awaits those who defy the omnipotent strength of the Spirit by the puny threats of mere physical power. This is a scriptural illustration of the eternal conflict between spirit and flesh, symbolized in figures that thrill with a terrible

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. 31.

significance. There is no wickedness named here but the wickedness of being great and strong and beautiful, *to the limit of physical perfection*; but being nothing beyond that limit, or rather, being all within that limit which such a circumscribed existence would inevitably lead to: "The fruit of the proud heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of the haughtiness of his eyes." <sup>1</sup> Here too is described the fatal delusion by which the *consciousness* of power, the physical sensation of strength, blinds the very common sense and reason of the proud-hearted: "Shall the axe boast itself against him that cutteth with it? or shall the saw exalt itself against him by whom it is drawn? as if a rod should lift itself up against him that lifteth it up, and a staff exalt itself, which is but wood." <sup>2</sup> The very madness of the delusion is mocked at as the pride mounts higher and higher and success o'ertops success. Each phase of it is traced from that first intoxication with the sense of power which uttered its vain boasts like a man full of new wine, "By the strength of my own hand I have done it, and by my own wisdom I have understood: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have taken the spoils of the princes, and as a mighty man hath pulled down them that sat on high," <sup>3</sup> upwards to those dizzy heights towards which the blinded victim climbs, till that very pinnacle is reached which is set not one degree higher or lower than the measure of the judgment that awaits it has decreed. And the only condition that can accomplish this judgment is pride's

<sup>1</sup> Isa. 10: 13.<sup>2</sup> Isa. 10: 15.<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 10: 13

attainment of this same degree of exaltation, which is its own measure of success — *and failure*. The fall of the Assyrian describes the very psychology of pride; and the relics of that fall still lie upon the earth to mock the folly of those who still “go down to Egypt for help, trusting in horses, and putting strength in chariots, because they are many.”<sup>1</sup>

Since modern psychological research popularized knowledge regarding the phenomena of hypnotism, it has become a common thing to attribute great public success to the power of personal magnetism, and to explain history’s record of the great personal achievements of its heroes by this same secret of magnetic personality, consciously or unconsciously used to sway the wills and hearts of millions, and to enthrone itself upon the seats of the mighty. Doubtless the very foundations of the world have at times been shaken under the magic spell of personal power, the charm of personality vested in one single little worm of the earth; and history no doubt does present to us here and there the humiliating spectacle of millions of other worms of the earth grovelling before such a personality, or writhing under the irresistible fascination that is luring them to their ruin. Thus is the mystery of personality recorded in the world’s history; and thus are we of a more enlightened age recording it still for the future when we too yield ourselves up to the elemental impulse of human nature to prostrate itself before the dazzling power of personal greatness, and to forget in our abject

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*; 31: 1.

admiration of physical perfection that we are forswearing our birthright to a higher good than this. Such weakness is the strength of the Assyrian; it is the secret of his success: "My hand hath found the strength of the people as a nest; and as eggs are gathered . . . so have I gathered all the earth: and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or made the least noise." <sup>1</sup>

This is the ancient story of worldly power: strength founded in oppression; this is the secret of worldly success: triumph built upon delusion; perfection with its foot upon its rival's neck. And this is the simple solution of the mystery of personal magnetism, whose inherent strength is operative only through others' inherent weakness. It has no foe while it has no fear; but fear tracks its footsteps like a hound; fear for the loss of its power; dread of the defeat that waits upon its victims' disillusionment. "The Assyrian shall fall by the sword not of a man . . . he shall flee not at the face of the sword . . . *his strength shall pass away with dread.*" <sup>2</sup>

One of the vain dreams of the false prophets of our age is that through physical perfection the race shall come into its kingdom and shall attain all happiness. And so to-day the culture of the purely physical has become a religion among the people; has formulated its doctrines and built up its temples for the worship of its ideal: human flesh perfected and deified through immunity from all pain and sickness and death. "The struggle for life, they assure us, is steadily eliminating

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 10: 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 31: 8.



imperfect forms, and as the fittest continue to survive we shall have a gradual perfecting of being. That is to say, that completeness is to be sought for in the organism — we are to be complete in nature and in ourselves. . . . Civilization . . . will improve the environment step by step as it improves the organism, or the organism as it improves the environment.” These are some of the more common by-words of this new cult, whose imposing apologetic has become almost the universal language of ethical religious culture in the world to-day. Yet

“we have not said, or implied, that there is not a God of Nature. We have not affirmed that there is no natural religion. We are assured there is. We are even assured that without a Religion of Nature Religion is only half complete; that without a God of Nature the God of Revelation is only half intelligible and only partially known. God is not confined to the outermost circle of environment. He lives and moves and has His being in the whole. Those who only seek Him in the further zone can only find a part. The Christian who knows not God in Nature, who does not, that is to say, correspond with the whole environment, most certainly is partially dead. . . . The principle that want of correspondence is death applies all round. He who knows not God in Nature only partially lives. The converse of this, however, is not true. . . . *He who knows God only in Nature lives not.* There is no ‘correspondence’ with an Unknown God, no ‘continuous adjustment’ to a fixed First Cause. There is no ‘assimilation’ of Natural Law; no growth in the Image of ‘the All-Embracing.’ To correspond with the God of Science assuredly is not to live. ‘This is Life Eternal, to *know*

'Thee, the true God, and *Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent.*'" <sup>1</sup>

In the scheme of this doctrine of Physical Perfection there is no place for a Deity who could become subject to the frailties of human nature; who would accept the portion of pain, defeat, and death which is our common lot. The Deity of such a religion must transcend the laws of human life; must be so far beyond and above the reach of human weakness that no conceivable perfection of human flesh could ever contain His indefectible immunity from all those laws of life and death *and love* under whose burden the race of man staggers from the cradle to the grave.

<sup>1</sup> *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, p. 147.

"The light of Nature, say the most for it, is dim — how dim we ourselves, with the glare of other Light upon the modern world, can only realize when we seek pagan records of the past for the gropings after truth of those whose only light was this. Powerfully significant and touching as these efforts were in their success, they are far more significant and touching in their failure. For they did fail. It requires no philosophy now to speculate on the inadequacy or adequacy of the Religion of Nature. For us who could never weigh it rightly in the scales of Truth, it has been tried in the balance of experience and found wanting. Theism is the easiest of all religions to get, but the most difficult to keep. Individuals have kept it, but nations never. Socrates and Aristotle, Cicero and Epicurus, had a theistic religion; Greece and Rome had none. And even after getting what seems like a firm place in the minds of men, its unstable equilibrium sooner or later betrays itself. On the one hand, theism has always fallen into the wildest polytheism, or on the other into the blankest atheism. 'It is an indubitable historical fact that, outside of the sphere of special revelation, man has never obtained such a knowledge of God as a responsible and religious being plainly requires. The wisdom of the heathen world, at its very best, was utterly inadequate to the accomplishment of such a task as creating a due abhorrence of sin, controlling the passions, purifying the heart, and ennobling the conduct.'

"What is the inference? That this poor rushlight by itself was never meant to lend the ray by which man should read the riddle of the universe.

And so the precedent for perfection which the life of Jesus offers has become a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence not only to man's ideal of himself, but to his ideal of God. To such an ideal the Sacred Humanity might be the most perfect humanity, morally speaking, ever born of woman; but on its physical side it was an utter failure; and in its spiritual capacity it could no more contain God than any other human being in whom moral perfection was as highly developed as in Jesus Himself; or it could, rather, contain Him just as much.

While it may seem that in our age more than in any other the works done in Jesus' name outnumber even the mighty achievements of all other human effort and bear testimony to the spread of His kingdom upon earth, we have no evidence in this alone that His mission to humanity is being fulfilled. These things are testimony to the love of humanity for itself and to Jesus only as the founder of the Religion of Humanity. But if Jesus Christ be not God, who would want His religion? — *and who would want God?* Who would want a Deity so mighty that the infinitesimal things of His own creation could never by even the most infinite expansion of their capacity contain His presence for an instant; Who would blast the limits and bounds of the universe and reduce the world to chaos if by so much as one swift visitation of His omnipotence His presence

The mystery is too impenetrable and remote for its uncertain flicker to more than make the darkness deeper.—What indeed if this were not a light at all, but only a part of a light . . . the reflector in the great Lantern which contains the Light of the World?" — *Ibid.*, p. 149.

passed over earth in visible shape? Such would be the visitation of God among men, — if He were such a God; if He were Jupiter or Zeus, or fire or force; or Infinity or First Cause or The Absolute; or any single one of His attributes and just that one only. Such has not been His visitation because He is not these things alone, and through them alone He could not manifest His presence to men.

We might, for the sake of realizing this more, even say of Him that He tried to do so and failed; for since creation's dawn His omnipotence has thundered through the universe, and men, having ears, heard not; He has flashed His glory across the sky and hung His riches upon the heights of space; *His Spirit hath adorned the heavens*,<sup>1</sup> and, having eyes, men saw not. He hurled His judgments upon them from Sinai's mountain top, and they laughed and danced down in the valley even while He was speaking. He brought them out of the wilderness into the land of milk and honey, and they forgot the Hand that fed them: "Lo, these things are said in part of His ways: and seeing we have heard scarce a little drop of His word";<sup>2</sup> for by

<sup>1</sup> Job 26: 14.

<sup>2</sup> "All knowledge lies in Environment. When I want to know about minerals I go to minerals. When I want to know about flowers I go to flowers. And they tell me. In their own way they speak to me, each in its own tongue, and each for itself — not the mineral for the flower, which is impossible, nor the flower for the mineral, which is also impossible. So if I want to know about man, I go to his part of the Environment. And he tells me about himself, not as the plant or the mineral, for he is neither, but in his own way. And if I want to know about God, I go to His part of the Environment. And He tells me about Himself, not as a man, for He is not man, but in His own way. And just as naturally as

none of these things did He reveal Himself *as He is*, because none of them is God, — *for God is Love*; and love can be interpreted to man only through humanity's language of love; only through those symbols which are enthroned forever in man's heart as love's supreme expression — the *Mother and the Child*. God used such language to express Himself in love; and Jesus was the living Word of His message to mankind. God spoke through Him and by Him those words which spell Love in the language of humanity, — sacrifice, selflessness; tenderness, sympathy — all the words born of that rich pregnancy of Love which fructified at the coming of an Incarnate God among mankind. *This is the God we want*; One Who could clothe Himself in the flesh of a Babe, that we might love Him, with a love that is most human: One Who would hide His awful majesty under the form of Bread, that He might feed our hunger for Him, — a hunger that is most divine.

the flower and the mineral and the man, each in their own way, tell me about themselves, He tells me about Himself. He very strangely condescends indeed in making things plain to me, actually assuming for a time the Form of a Man that I at my poor level may better see Him. *This is my opportunity to know Him*. This incarnation is God making Himself accessible to human thought — God opening to man the possibility of correspondence through Jesus Christ. And this correspondence and this environment are those I seek. He Himself assures me, 'This is Life Eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.' Do I not now discern the deeper meaning in '*Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent?*' Do I not better understand with what rapture the profoundest of the disciples exclaims, 'And we know that the Son of God is come: and hath given us understanding that we may know the true God. . . . This is the true God and life eternal.' (1 John 5: 20.)" — *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, p. 216.

From this Word made Flesh we have framed a language of love so strange and mysterious in its meanings that it has become, as it were, a secret code of ethics among those who have mastered its hidden sense. The only key to its meanings is love itself; and love alone can lead the soul into the secret place where it shall find this key. Knowledge has searched for it in vain; it has unearthed things hidden from the foundation of the world in pursuit of that elusive something which always escapes its grasp just as the groping thought merges from the last rays of reason's light into the impenetrable darkness of mystery. Knowledge cannot even prove that this something was there; it cannot find so much as the faintest clew of its passing presence and is no nearer to the discovery of it after all its flights in the light and all its gropings in the dark than when it began its first blundering search for it. Knowledge cannot find, or cannot prove Religion.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "What is Religion? What am I to believe? What seek with all my heart and soul and mind? — this is the imperious question sent up to the consciousness from the depths of being in all earnest hours; sent down again, alas, with many of us, time after time, unanswered. Into all our thought and work and reading this question pursues us. But the theories are rejected one by one; the great books are returned sadly to their shelves, the years pass, and the problem remains unsolved. The confusion of tongues here is terrible. Every day a new authority announces himself. Poets, philosophers, preachers, try their hand on us in turn. New prophets arise, and beseech us for our soul's sake to give ear to them — at last in an hour of inspiration they have discovered the final truth. Yet the doctrine of yesterday is challenged by a fresh philosophy to-day; and the creed of to-day will fall in turn before the criticism of to-morrow. *Increase of knowledge increaseth sorrow.* And at length the conflicting truths, like the beams of light in the laboratory experiment, combine in the mind to make total darkness."—*Ibid.*, p. 213.

*Religion is Love.* You cannot prove love—but you can know its manifestations! A man's capacity for love is his capacity for religion. The greatest lover who ever lived upon earth was Jesus—and He *is* Religion; for religion, like God, is Love. It is not knowledge or power, or rightness or truth; or virtue or worship or good works,—though it includes all these, and more, in its capacity for good. Religion is the soul's search for God, and God's pursuit of the soul. Jesus is the Clue to Himself that God has set in the pathway of the soul; and when the soul finds this Clue it has found God.

## VI

### THE WAYS OF LOVE

He will be silent in His love. — SOPH. 3: 17.

#### THE SOUL

A SOUL under the spell of love craves solitude as the body craves life's breath. It stifles for space and liberty that it may fill the universe with the vision of that beauty of its beloved which the bounds of its own heart cannot contain. It would sweep from the earth the images of all other beauty that but fret it with distraction from the beauty of the inner vision. It would be alone; it would fly even from the *visible* presence of its own beloved; it would sit solitary and brood upon the thought of the beauty and the love that ravished it rather than it would clasp it with sentient touch. And this because love and beauty in their essence are of the soul rather than of the body; and the soul shudders as the rough touch of sense shatters that clear vision of the inner eye which portrayed love and beauty in a form too exquisite for the grasp of sense to hold; too vague and elusive for the gaze of the human eye to recognize.

“In this deep loneliness God set  
Each soul as in a shrine;  
He bade His Virgin she should keep



Her separate light ashine;  
While others on strange hearths attend  
The flames that are not mine."

In this deep loneliness of love the soul discovers itself, as it were, for the first time, as an entity; as something which has lived and will forever live its own interior life inherently in itself, which holds at will some strange and absolute possession over its own Ego, and withdraws or shares this possession with others according to the dictates of its own imperious and personal choice. Sometimes this withdrawal wraps the soul in a sombre isolation that detaches it utterly from all life and consciousness and love outside itself, —

"In the high watch tower of the soul  
I tarry all day long.  
The days flit by like flocks of birds  
But not one has a song.  
My soul — it has no other soul  
To which it doth belong.

"All night I watch from my high tower  
The great worlds come and go;  
Their faces flare along the dark  
Like wandering stars below.  
But who has seen two stars that touch?  
And space has said me No."

Again its yearning for sympathy drives it irresistibly towards the object which has for the first time made it aware of the dearth and emptiness within itself while this object is unattained.

“My body is a waste  
Through which my soul doth haste,  
Famished until it taste  
Its nameless new desire!

“I thirst! My throat is dried!  
I ask; — am still denied!  
Cry to be satisfied, —  
*Yet only as Love will.*”

Hiddenness is the very home of love, and the only shadow that haunts this home is the dread of that day when discovery shall unveil the deep hiding-place wherein its secret treasures lie. Secrecy is love's most inherent instinct; and, guided by its keen apprehensions, love escapes discovery by an elusiveness almost infinite in its resources, — and can forever so escape it *if it will*, for by love's own consent alone shall its treasure be yielded up. We cannot fathom the mystery of that strange law by which love inviolate, love undiscovered, is alone the love we want; the love we pursue with unremitting desire; the love we elect above all others for its supremely alluring charm, — a charm we have not seen, yet know is there for we feel its strange spell upon us and we must follow where it leads. These things belong to love's mysticism; and we may not press beyond the borders of that land enclosed, and sentinelled by watchers holy with reserve, unless we have no other quest than love; and feel no other spur urging us onward than love itself; “love which faints not, nor lies down; which watches, and sleeping, slumbers not: which feels no burden, values

no labours; when weary is not tired; when straitened is not constrained; when frightened is not disturbed; love which will tend upwards like a lively flame and a burning torch, — which will be at liberty, — yet circumspect; humble and upright, — not soft, nor light; but sober, chaste, and quiet. Love which many waters cannot quench, neither can the floods drown it; *love strong as death*; — the perfect love, *which casteth out fear*."

Love does not hide itself because it fears discovery, but because by eluding discovery it invites pursuit. For a soul to seek solitude and to hide from men's sight merely that others may know it has set out upon love's quest is to make a display of love's secrets which will sue in vain for praise and admiration from those to whom these secrets are mere contradiction and folly. This is to pervert love's quest, and to frustrate the plan by which its object may be attained. Always and forever that plan is secrecy; hiddenness to the point of obliteration; unobtrusiveness which strives for utter self-effacement; withdrawal that shrinks into annihilation, — these are the means which love's instinct for secrecy leads it to pursue that it may hold its heart's treasure inviolate.

"I will be silent in my soul  
Since God has girt me round  
With His own silences in which  
There is no space for sound.  
Only His voice perchance may drop  
Like dew upon the ground."

There are two ways by which love hides itself; and for the sake of defining their contrast better we might call one the physical way and the other the spiritual way. The former seeks material means for concealment; puts physical barriers between itself and others; announces its intention to disappear, — and thereby reveals the clue whereby it may be discovered. The other obliterates itself by the more subtle means of absolute refrainment from all outward manifestations of its inward presence, —

“My soul is girt in secrecies  
Like the petals of a rose;  
My breath which is among them floats  
On every wind that blows.  
They are like sleep around a dream —  
There is no one that knows.”

it walks abroad through the public ways of men and in the simple unobtrusiveness of its outer personality they see nothing that betrays the presence of the inward spirit; — only that at times the air seems to lift and clear at its passing, and someone within the reach of its hidden influence feels the touch of a virtue that went out from it. The other is no different from this one in its external gifts and graces, — perhaps it even outshines the latter in this respect; but somehow its finish reveals “the mark of the tool; the other, with God’s breath still upon it, is an inspiration; not more virtuous, but differently virtuous; not more humble, but different, wearing the meek and quiet spirit artlessly as to the manner born. The other-worldliness of such a

character is the thing that strikes you; you are not prepared for what it will do or say or become next, for it moves from a far-off centre, and in spite of its transparency and sweetness, that presence fills you always with awe. A man never feels the discord of his own life, never hears the jar of the machinery by which he tries to manufacture his own good points, till he has stood in the stillness of such a presence. Then he discerns the difference between growth and work. *He has considered the lilies, how they grow."*<sup>1</sup>

In such a manner did Jesus hide from men the terrible potency of that God-love within him which would have ravished men to ecstasy had not its irresistible attraction been tempered and subdued into the semblance of a love which humanity could both understand and endure; a love which would *win* the heart of man, not force it, to admiration, desire, and surrender. Though it might have been a quicker way to draw men to God by flashing one single ray of the vision of His omnipotence upon their understanding, than to hang helpless in death upon a shameful cross, it would have been a way which a God of love could not stoop to use upon the creatures of His hand; because by such an act He would have robbed us of the priceless gift of liberty to choose Him of our own free will, — the one condition of our choice which He covets with an inexorable jealousy; and without which our love for Him would be a mere blind fatalism.

Liberty to love is demanded by the soul with an insist-

<sup>1</sup> *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, p. 121.

ence proportionate to its desire for love. The soul writhes under check or hindrance to its pursuit of love, when this desire has reached the climax of conscious want, with an anguish that no bonds of steel could inflict upon human flesh. This is the soul's condition once it has discovered that God is the only good which will satisfy its wants; once it knows that the vast emptiness which terrifies it in its moments of solitude and darkness is only its capacity for God. "*In this capacity for God lies its receptivity*" for Him. "The chamber is not only ready to receive the new Life, but the Guest is expected, and, till He comes, is missed. Till then the soul yearns and pines, waving its tentacles piteously in the air, feeling after God if so be that it may find Him. This is not peculiar to the . . . Christian's soul. In every land and in every age there have been altars to the Known and Unknown God. It is now agreed as a mere question of anthropology that the universal language of the human soul has always been 'I perish with hunger.' This is what fits it for Christ. There is a grandeur in this cry from the depths which makes its very unhappiness sublime." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 269.

"The soul, in its highest sense, is a vast capacity for God. It is like a curious chamber added on to being, and somehow involving being, a chamber with elastic and contractile walls, which can be expanded, with God as its Guest, illimitably, but which without God shrinks and shrivels until every vestige of the Divine is gone, and God's image is left without God's Spirit. One cannot call what is left a soul; it is a shrunken, useless organ, a capacity sentenced to death by disuse, which droops as a withered hand by the side, and cumbrous nature like a rotted branch. Nature has her revenge upon neglect as well as upon extravagance. Misuse, with her, is as mortal a sin as abuse. . . . It is no objection to all this to say

This is the hunger which may never be fed "by bread alone"; nor by any material good in exchange for God. Nor will any soul with such a hunger upon it seek for good in a direction opposite to God once it has found the clue that will set it upon the track to Him. A soul that wants God like this can be trusted to find Him even in the dark, — only let it go its own way to Him: If it would climb up to the mountain top, let it go there; if it would seek Him in the depths of the sea, do not hinder it. Dare not to set bounds and limits to

that we are unconscious of this neglect or misdirection of our powers. That is the darkest feature of the case. If there were uneasiness there might be hope. If there were, somewhere about our soul, a something which had not gone to sleep like all the rest; if there were a contending force anywhere; if we would let even that work instead of neglecting it, it would gain strength from hour to hour, and waken up one at a time each torpid and dishonoured faculty till our whole nature became alive with strivings against self, and every avenue was open wide for God. But the apathy, the numbness of the soul, what can be said of such a symptom but that it means the creeping on of death? There are accidents in which the victim feels no pain. They are well and strong they think. But they are dying. And if you ask the surgeon by their side what makes him give this verdict, he will say it is this numbness over the frame which tells how some of the parts have lost already the very capacity for life.

"Nor is it the least tragic accompaniment of this process that its effects may even be concealed from others. The soul undergoing degeneration, surely by some arrangement with Temptation planned in the uttermost hell, possesses the power of *absolute secrecy*. When all within is festering decay and rottenness, a Judas, without anomaly, may kiss his Lord. This invisible consumption, like its fell analogue in the physical world, may even keep its victim beautiful while slowly slaying it. . . . Men tell us sometimes there is no such thing as an atheist. There must be. There are some men to whom it is true that there is no God. . . . If every Godward aspiration of the soul has been allowed to become extinct, and every inlet that was open to heaven to be choked, and every talent for religious love and trust to have been persistently neglected and ignored, where are the faculties to come from that would even find the faintest relish in such things as God and heaven give?" — *Ibid.*, 101-107.

its way of finding Him, saying to it, Thus far thou shalt go alone and no farther. Do not offer to go before it that you may guide its steps, lest you darken the light that shines upon its face; and put no check upon its speed by timing its paces to your own slow gait. It can be trusted to walk *alone* to Him whom it seeks. *It can never get to Him at all until it is able to go alone.*

Such a soul can be not only trusted in the dark; but it can be trusted in the light. There is no glare of noon day that can dispel that vision which to love's eyes out-shines the light of sun and moon and stars; there is no place so populous with life, and so teeming with the distracting activities of men, that it cannot make into a wilderness for itself by the absolute preoccupation of its own conscious thought with God alone; and by the utter aloofness of its inner life from all external things. This is not the mere fancifulness of mysticism. It is a simple psychological condition of mind; so common to preoccupied thought that we would hardly make a comment upon it if our neighbour at his desk near by should not, in his absorption with his own work or thought, hear our voice at his ear or observe our casual passing in and out, though he might seem to be gazing at us with fixed attention. If such mental states close up the media of the senses to our inner consciousness, there are heart states that can make the world about us one great dead blank, and the whole universe a vacuum in which we hear only the beat of our own pulse; and feel only the great spaces that fill



up, yet divide, the distance between our groping soul and God.

“Though His sweet presence like a light  
Is shed about the place —  
My Love to whom I am most near, — I have  
I have not seen His face.  
My tears, which are not His, must drop,  
To reach His heart, through space.”

There is no defeat for love like this, or that which to others would be defeat, to it would be but the shorter road to its goal. Like him who strives to hold his balance upon the pinnacle of this world's greatness, to it defeat can only come through *jeal*. But *perfect love casteth out jeal*. Neither can corruption steal between it and the vision of perfect purity upon which its eyes are fixed, — for such love has “become as a little child” — its eyes can see no evil while they look only with the veiled gaze of the clean of heart.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “It is not strange for the soul to find its life in God. This is its native air. God as the Environment of the soul has been from the remotest age the doctrine of all the deepest thinkers in religion. How profoundly Hebrew poetry is saturated with this high thought will appear when we try to conceive of it with this left out. True poetry is only science in another form. And long before it was possible for religion to give scientific expression to its greatest truths men of insight uttered themselves in psalms which could not have been truer to Nature had the most modern light controlled the inspiration. ‘As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so my soul panteth after Thee, O God.’ . . . It will be noticed that in the Hebrew poets the longing for God never strikes one as morbid, or unnatural to the men who uttered it. It is as natural for them to long for God as for the swallow to seek her nest. . . . How joyous a thing it was to the Hebrews to seek their God! How artlessly they call upon Him to entertain them in His pavilion, to cover them with His feathers, to hide them in His secret place, to hold them in the hollow of His hand, or stretch around them

These are love's uncommon ways; the paths it treads when "the burden of the valley of vision" which bore it down, yet urged it on, has been lifted from its heart; and it steps free upon the heights where love's only law is the liberty that unbinds all law; yet puts it under that sweet constraint of love from which it now may never more be loosed.

But there are still the common ways for us to cover who dwell down in the twilight peace of the valley; and we cannot always see why we who need the light here more than those who have reached the mountain top should have to build all our hopes and risk all our happiness upon the promises of a God who hides His face; nor why those who, in their weakness and doubt, most need the sight of Him should be the ones who are most deprived of His presence. Why we should grope and stumble in this darkness we do not know, when even the merest glimpse of His face would so lighten the gloom upon Faith's pathway. Yet we cannot tell with what infinitesimal calculation God reckons up the

the everlasting arms. These men were true children of Nature. As the humming-bird among its own palm-trees, as the ephemera in the sunshine of a summer evening, so they lived their joyous lives. And even the full share of the sadder experiences of life which came to all of them but drove them the further into the Secret Place, and led them with more consecration to make, as they expressed it, 'the Lord their portion.' All that has been said since Marcus Aurelius to Swedenborg, from Augustine to Schleiermacher of a besetting God as the final complement of humanity, is but a repetition of the Hebrew poet's faith. And even the New Testament has nothing higher to offer than this. The psalmist's 'God is our refuge and strength' is only the earlier form less defined, but not less noble, of Christ's 'Come unto Me, and I will give you rest.' " — *Ibid.*, 246-248.

value of each weak effort of human flesh to fight off the foe of sin; of each sudden piteous sigh for peace and rest from the unending struggle of it all; of every blind grasp in the dark upon any hold that would bear up the sinking spirit till the light breaks again; of even those unuttered murmurs of the lonely soul and the suffering heart which His inscrutable hiddenness at times almost presses into open reproach. We can see the reason for these things sometimes when the broad noonday of joy lights up all the earth and shines far out into the unfathomable depths of space. Yet even in the twilight gloom of our common daily life the cold mind sees a reason for this struggle towards the Unseen Good; and marks the mysterious results of it even upon our external lives. We know these are the processes by which the spirit's fibre is refined and strengthened, and that exquisite quality given to the human soul which we call character. We do not know the actual operation of this process upon the spirit, but we know the results of it when we see it. And we have seen and watched the silent mysterious workings of this hidden force even in the souls of those nearest and dearest to us; we have marked the gentler touch of the hand as time has borne them along on its tides of disappointment and bereavement of this world's good; and have caught that note of tenderness in the voice that is left behind by the tears of a sorrow subdued and past. Again, in the face and voice of friends we have met after years of absence we have noted a change; and have thought for a moment, They are the same

yet not the same as the image we have carried in our heart. It is not the marks of time that have made the difference; but some strange transforming power has touched their spirits, and the traits we knew and loved in them so well seem to have emerged from the rough into the clear-cut outlines that define that ideal of them which has sometimes visited us in dreams.

“Mysteriousness is the test of spiritual birth. And this was Christ’s test. The wind bloweth where it listeth. Thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth, *so is every one that is born of the Spirit*. The test of spirituality is that you cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth. If you can tell, if you can account for it on philosophical principles, on the doctrine of influence, on strength of will, on a favourable environment, it is not growth. It may be so far a success; it may be a perfectly honest, even remarkable, and praiseworthy imitation, but it is not the real thing. The fruits are wax, the flowers artificial — you can tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth.”<sup>1</sup>

These are the outward signs of the inward grace of love’s secret work upon the soul. These are the spontaneous revealings of that growth towards God which bears to mere imitation of such growth the same resemblance that the flower of wax bears to the lily of the field; and this growth, too, like the flower of nature, betrays its hiding-place more often by its perfume than by its presence there.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118.

## VII

### THE SINGULARITY OF THE SAINTS

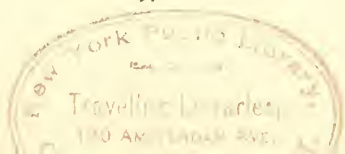
Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect, but I follow after. — Phil. 3: 12.

#### IMITATION

It is not possible to understand the singularity of the saints, and it is less than honest to imitate it until we come to know, at least by some small measure of personal experience, the force of the motive behind their sanctity.

To devote one's attention to merely imitating the saints is to divert one's mind from the very principle which made them saints, and upon which all true sanctity must be based. We might succeed in making ourselves almost the replica of a saint externally, but if the interior principle and motive of his sanctity did not become a fact of our own personal experience we would be perhaps a poorer representation of such sanctity at the end of all our efforts than if we had remained our own poor shabby selves.

We are only frustrating the mission of the saints to humanity, and misconstruing the supreme lesson of their lives to us, when we make a blind imitation of what they did and what they were the whole aim of our study of them. Our business is to get to the



bottom of *why* they did these things, and how they came to do them. We must get at the motive of doing anything before we can rightly understand and fulfil the method of doing it. It is only for soulless machines to work with method, and without motive. Let us master the motive of sanctity before we attempt to copy the method of it; for the latter is the mere framework of the saint's individual life; suited to his own peculiar character, conditions, and period; and perhaps most unsuited to any other. "Such is the inexplicable variety of internal dispositions, that the same course and order will scarce serve any two souls."<sup>1</sup> The motive only is absolute and arbitrary in its meaning for all souls alike, for it describes the single destiny of all souls, — eternal union with God, through personal perfection.

We do not notice that the saints were given to imitating other saints; but that all of them seem to stand with singular distinctness in a little world of their own, set apart sometimes from their fellows and estranged from all by this very singularity of character, the like of which may never have been known before. "The measure and manner of loving God is to love Him immeasurably and without any prescribed manner," is St. Bernard's standard of saintliness. Once let the real sense of this seize upon the inner consciousness and we would not only understand the *motive* of sanctity, but would become so absorbed in fulfilling the behests of its hidden impulses that the manner and

<sup>1</sup> *Sancta Sophia*, Treatise 1, Sect. 2, Chap. 3, § 8.

method of their expression would be as unstudied and as unconscious in us as it was in the saints themselves.<sup>1</sup>

It is no wonder that the lives of the saints are so misunderstood and even so much disliked by common Christians. To such as these the saints often appear to be almost anything outside the category of sane human beings; and all from the mistake we have made in presenting the saint's life, as it were, in an inverted order. Either from not being able to understand the motive of sanctity, or of not being able to explain it if we did understand it, we have obscured, and even eliminated, this basic principle from our description of

<sup>1</sup> "That without such an interior tendance and desire no exterior sufferances or observances will imprint any true virtue in the soul, or bring her nearer to God, we see in the example of Suso, who for the first five years of a religious profession found no satisfaction in soul at all, notwithstanding all his care and exactness in exterior regular observances and mortifications: he perceived plainly that *still he wanted something*, but what that was he could not tell, till God was pleased to discover it to him, and put him in the way to attain to his desire, which was in spirit to tend continually to this union, without which all his austerities and observances served little or nothing." — *Ibid.*, Treatise 2, Chap. 4, § 4.

This author uses a still more striking example from the lives of the saints in illustrating the difference between methods and motives of sanctity in his interesting account (*Ibid.*, Treatise 3, Sect. 1, Chap. 7) of Bl. Baltazar Alvarez' sudden illumination on this vital point. He, too, like Suso, had followed the *method* in vain, "and for near sixteen years had laboured as one that tills the ground without reaping any fruit." Then the light came. "But when sixteen years were passed, he found his heart on the sudden unexpectedly quite changed and dilated, . . . and his soul . . . filled with an astonishing joy, like that of those which say, 'Lord, when we see Thee, we have seen all good, and are entirely satiated.'"

*Si semper desideras, semper oras*, says St. Augustine; if thou dost continually desire God, thou dost continually pray.



the saint's life, and have presented a mere history of singularities and wonders that have repelled instead of attracted the common mind. Far from this principle being beyond their comprehension, it is on the contrary just such uncalculating minds that most readily respond to the appeal of it. It is more comprehensible to them how a human being can be so dominated by a great passion, by such a great overmastering attraction to a supreme good as to be reckless of all consequences, blind to human policies and considerations, and rash even to the point of idiocy in the effort to reach this good, — all this appeals more immediately to the simple, unquestioning mind, moved only by human nature's impulses and emotions, than it does to the higher intelligence, prone to distrust the experience of others till it has itself made a personal test of it. — "As substantial holiness, so the perfection of it, which is contemplation, consists far more principally in the operation of the will than of the understanding," again says Father Baker; and if we keep this oft-repeated fact in mind, we shall get the point of view from which to rightly estimate the character of sanctity.

We may never succeed in making the unintelligent Christian — or any other Christian for that matter — understand the singularities of the saints, or rightly appreciate their methods of sanctity, until we have succeeded in grasping the simple, fundamental fact of sanctity's supreme motive; which is the saint's overmastering conviction that God is not only the highest good, but the only good either in this world or in any



other;<sup>1</sup> and that all the conduct of his personal life is but a consistent effort to attain that good in the shortest possible time, over the shortest possible road. His method of accomplishing this is for the most part his own, the spontaneous expression of his own personal and perhaps inherent characteristics, and it is worked out almost unconsciously as he goes along: He has that gift which is common to most genius, and to all high grades of character, abstraction from externals, and an almost utter unconsciousness of manner; evidencing simply an interior fixity of will and purpose which is proof against the shock or surprise of external influences. He would hardly brook the distraction of studied method or prescribed manner, as it would be to him little more than a turning away of his gaze from that goal whereon all his desires and all his thoughts are irrevocably fixed. The sight of that is spur enough to him; and his impulse towards it rough-rides all obstacles in his way. How foolish to try to follow in his wake unless we too have glimpsed that shining goal, and felt the impulse and the spur to reach it that the vision gave us. And how fatal to check our progress towards it, once we have set out to reach it, by stopping to trace every path and by-path through which the feet of others have found their way to this goal. It is well,

<sup>1</sup> "They not only believe and know, but even feel and taste Him to be the universal, infinite Good. By means of a continual conversation with Him, they are reduced to a blessed state of . . . transcendancy and forgetfulness of all created things, *and especially of themselves*, to a heavenly-mindedness and fixed attention to God only, and this even in the midst of employments to others never so distractive." — *Ibid.*, Treatise 1, Sect. 1, Chap. 3, § 7.

and most cheering to us indeed, if we find the marks of saintly footsteps on the same road by which we have ourselves been led. They have been left there merely to give that assurance the traveller feels, as he goes into an unknown region, when he finds the footprints of one who has explored the way before him. He does not follow their leading out of a foolish desire to imitate the fatigue and sufferings that the painful and difficult journey must have cost to him who went before. He simply takes this road with the same end in view that the other had, and blesses and praises him for having blazed the way.

He who would travel the road to sanctity must have the key by which to read aright the sign posts he meets along the way, lest their seeming contradictions only mislead him into a maze of spiritual confusion and darkness. Let him have no other object in his mind than the journey's end and he will have the key to every occult sign and mystic meaning hidden in the annals of saintly lore.<sup>1</sup> (The sign-language of the elect! How well these chosen ones know each other's meanings when they meet face to face; when soul looks into soul and greets a brother pilgrim bound for the self-same object. How quick the recognition when the

<sup>1</sup> "Yea, I dare with all confidence pronounce, that if all spiritual books in the world were lost, and there were no external directors at all, yet if a soul that has a *natural aptness* . . . will prosecute prayer and abstraction of life . . . and propose Almighty God, His will, love, honour, for her final intention . . . such a soul would walk clearly in perfect light . . . and would not fail in due time to arrive at perfect contemplation." — *Ibid.*, Treatise 1, Sect. 2, Chap. 3, § 17.

magic of a word, or the flash of a glance, reveals spirit unto kindred spirit!)

To impute as folly the exaggerated and extravagant fervour of the saints is only to confess one's own short-sighted conception of that good which is the divine object of all their desires. Yet to admire and imitate this fervour in the hope that this would in itself bring to the consciousness a realization of that good would be to confess that one had never had the personal experience of conceiving good in this form and was simply striving to borrow another's conception of it. Love cannot see with borrowed eyes. No matter how fair a vision another may have of love's object it is not so dear and intimate a thing as one's own conception of that object; and it is untrue as a conception until it possesses the mind and will with a conviction of its truth as intense and as real as the original conception in the mind of the other. "We can do the outward deeds and say the words of love; but over the thing itself we have no direct command. It is given to us like the inspirations of genius; or it happens to us; and we can dispose ourselves to receive it and can co-operate with it when received; but it means in some sense a grace, nor can we by taking thought add a foot to our stature in this matter."<sup>1</sup>

While there is the kind of imitation which seeks with sincere desire to acquire sanctity by method, from lack either of natural ability or grace to achieve it by motive, there is another kind of imitation which, like a veritable

<sup>1</sup> *Lex Orandi*, p. 200.

parasite, fastens upon the most vital forms of the Christian life. It is not satisfied with the imitation of ordinary righteousness, but takes the pose of some extraordinary virtue, or zeal in well-doing. The most striking resemblance it bears to the real parasite is in its own inherent lack of even the *capacity* to possess the qualities which it assumes. This explains more than anything else its eagerness to borrow their semblance, — as it were to hide its own nakedness and deformity. The unhappy result of this deception seldom comes back upon itself, — for it is facile in assuming other guises as fast as the old ones are torn from it, — but upon those who have been imposed upon by the imitation. The peculiar thing about this kind of inferior persons is their talent for deceiving superior and spiritual minds. “It takes a thief to catch a thief,” — or at least guilelessness too often unfits one for detecting the deceits of guile. Spiritual books are full of accounts of this kind of impostors; and in most cases where the mask has been torn off them, some very clever bit of common sense has been used to set the trap. Imitation of an inferior thing is not worth while; and it is equally useless for inferiority to impose only upon the inferior. “Rogues and liars prosper just so long as there is a majority of honest men to lie to; but a community of rogues could not hold together; their theory of conduct is untrue to the nature of human society.”<sup>1</sup>

There is still another kind of imitation which comes from mere weakness and lack of personal initiative.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

It is almost motiveless except in its desire to secure its own safety by blindly following precedent; and saving itself the risk or the penalty of acting consistently with its own characteristics. This kind of imitation is best described by its analogy to certain phenomena in nature. "Recent botanical researches have made science familiar with what is termed *Mimicry*. Certain organisms in one kingdom assume, for purposes of their own, the outward form of organisms belonging to another. This curious hypocrisy is practised both by plants and animals, the object being to secure some personal advantage, usually *safety*, which would be denied were the organism always to play its part in Nature *in propria persona*. . . . It is a startling result of the indirect influence of Christianity, or of a spurious Christianity, that the religious world has come to be populated — how largely one can scarce venture to think — with mimetic species. In few cases, probably, is this a conscious deception. In many, doubtless, it is induced by the desire for *safety*. But in a majority of instances it is the natural effect of the prestige of a great system upon those who, coveting its benedictions, yet fail to understand its true nature, or decline to bear its profounder responsibilities. It is here that the test of Life becomes of supreme importance. . . .

"After all, it is by the general bent of a man's life, by his heart-impulses and secret desires, his spontaneous actions and abiding motives, that his generation is declared."<sup>1</sup> Until we know what a man loves, and to

<sup>1</sup> *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, pp. 351, 352.

what degree he loves it, we have no key to his real character, and may be profoundly deceived in our estimate of that which is only apparent. True also it is that a man's conduct in love is only the measure of his personal traits, and the revelation of his inmost qualities of heart and mind.

## VIII

### THE PENALTIES OF LOVE

The wisdom of the spirit is life and peace. — Rom. 8: 6.

#### SUFFERING

As the strongest, deepest love veils itself most in silence and secrecy, so does love's inevitable penalty, suffering, shrink from discovery and observation, and ignore even those appeals for pity with which it is besieged by its own weaker nature; — and by such ignoring does it not only conquer suffering, but gains the strength to suffer more, *and conquer more*: —

“God, harden me against myself,  
This coward with pathetic voice,  
Who craves for rest and ease and joys.

“Myself, arch-traitor to myself;  
My hollowest friend, my deadliest foe;  
My clog whatever way I go.

“Yet ONE there is can curb myself,  
Can roll the strangling load from me,  
Break off the yoke and set me free.”<sup>1</sup>

There are two schools of ascetics, so to speak, the conscious and the unconscious school; and they are vastly different from each other in their psychological

<sup>1</sup> *Who Shall Deliver Me?* Christina Rossetti.

characteristics. One seeks suffering as an end in itself, or rather seeks it as a necessary condition for acquiring spiritual perfection. The other seeks spiritual perfection as its end, and thereby entails suffering upon itself as a penalty. If suffering in itself is good, the way of the conscious ascetic in seeking it is the higher one; if suffering is a mere accident or result of the conflict between good and evil, it is not a necessary condition for perfection in the soul; though it is an almost invariable or involuntary accompaniment of high spirituality in this life. There is, however, one point of difference between these two kinds of suffering that seems to place the involuntary far above the voluntary kind in its spiritual characteristics. Physical suffering, self-inflicted, is calculated above all things to induce preoccupation with self; while the keenest pain of involuntary suffering, in finer spirits, is often caused by the necessity for self-attention which physical suffering entails. The cry of Saint Paul for deliverance from "the body of this death," voiced not so much his complainings against the flesh and its weakness, or the wish to be separated from his body by final dissolution, as it expressed his desire for the mastery of the spirit *in this life*, over the weakness and sufferings of the flesh. It would be unlike Saint Paul to wish to put an end to the struggle merely by death. This is the wish of the weakling and the coward, of the faint-hearted and despairing; who would have the prize without paying the cost, and who think that death alone cancels all the unpaid debts of life.



The usual motive of those seeking to attain perfection by voluntary, or self-inflicted suffering is the desire to imitate Christ or the saints in their sufferings. A perfectly true resemblance to Christ in His relation to suffering could never be established by any human soul. In one sense Christ never inflicted any physical suffering upon His own person. His sufferings were involuntary, while they at the same time were voluntary, in a sense which could be applied to no other sufferings but His. "I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again."<sup>1</sup> Christ voluntarily surrendered His will in order to feel the effects of suffering in His physical nature; and He had the power to resist by His Divine will all these effects, or to sustain His human nature under the utmost ravages made by suffering upon His person; He could not *sicken* and die from these effects in the same way that ordinary human nature would, which is subject to sickness by sin. Not sickness, which is the penalty of sin, but *voluntary sympathy* with and experience of the suffering caused by sin in human nature was the source of Christ's agony. Recovery from the most extreme condition of physical weakness or injury would have been consistent even with the powers of Christ's human nature, because sickness, or disease resulting from injury, could not fasten itself upon his uncorrupted flesh. "He was 'without sin,' and a body without sin can no more

<sup>1</sup> John 10: 17-18.

sicken than it can 'see corruption.'" And yet He not only felt all the effects of suffering in His own physical nature, but by His Divine power of sympathy with our fallen nature He felt suffering as we feel it: He "wept," "groaned," was "troubled," sank with exhaustion under the assaults of physical agony; was the "most abject of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity"; the "*chastisement of our peace was upon Him*";<sup>1</sup> — if we escaped the terrible realization and penalty of sin's consequences He could not; and yet He could, for all the time there was latent in His mighty will the power to pass immune from pain or from its effects upon His physical nature throughout the whole dark drama of His passion. *He was offered because it was His own will*;<sup>2</sup> by His own voluntary action alone He felt this pain and suffered the effects of it in death. In this sense His suffering was voluntary in an *inimitable* degree; while at the same time it was involuntary too in a sense altogether inimitable by our human nature, because only the same degree of consciousness as He had of the enormity of evil could cause the same degree of suffering as He experienced. This degree of suffering was an accident, or an accompaniment, or a *penalty* of His love.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Isa. 53: 5.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. 53: 7.

<sup>3</sup> "Christ, not being a sinner, could not, and did not, suffer from any disease. He was therefore never sick. He did not even die in the sense that men ordinarily die. *He voluntarily* laid down His life by the Crucifixion — just as He had voluntarily taken it by the Incarnation. 'Being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man' (Phil. 2: 7), it was necessary, however, that He should enter into all the experiences

It is not within man's power to become so like to Christ that he can have the same control over the *effects* of suffering as Christ could have had, had He willed it.<sup>1</sup> But many of the saints had approached so very near to Christ that they seemed to have had the power to surmount the effects of suffering to a superhuman degree — as in the case of the early martyrs. The secret of their strength in this respect was *abstraction* from self, and *absorption* with God. The degree of their absorption became the measure of their capacity for suffering. A distraction caused by voluntary suffering would have limited rather than increased this capacity. This would seem to show that with the saints the higher states of suffering were involuntary rather than volun-

of men. But it must be by His own voluntary action, *and not from any compulsion of nature.*

"Hence also we find that although He was never sick, yet there are many indications that he always suffered when he came into contact with sickness, and that when He healed the sick He 'felt that virtue had gone out of Him.' Time and again we find Him so worn out at the close of such a day as this (of healing the sick) that He could not sleep, but, 'rising very early, going out, he went into a desert place: and there *He prayed.*' Here was the secret source, not only of His spiritual, but of His physical strength.

"He not only felt the keenest sympathy for those who suffered, but, as the cause of all suffering — sin — was laid upon Him, He took upon Himself all the effects of sin and voluntarily bore them in His own sinless body. As death, however, had no dominion over Him, so disease had no dominion. It only left Him fatigued and exhausted, as when sickness passes away from the invalid. The sick one 'immediately' took His place in perfect health and strength without any of the weakness of convalescence, and He took the weakness and exhaustion of the convalescent sick. Thus during all His earthly life He entered into all of the temporal effects of sin, just as at His death He entered into its final penalty."

<sup>1</sup> The heresy of Christian science consists in its belief that man has this same *voluntary* power over the body by the strength of the mind or will.

tary; they were a consequence rather than a cause of sanctity.<sup>1</sup>

To strengthen the capacity for sanctity, or, in other words, to refine the quality of the spiritual faculties, necessarily increases the soul's capacity for suffering; while at the same time it often strengthens even the body's power of enduring physical pain. That "high-minded and intelligent indifference to small but annoying ailments, beyond cavil, increases effectiveness (both

<sup>1</sup> In a certain measure some of the saints resembled Christ in the voluntary character of their sufferings, because they had the power to escape "the penalties of love," by withdrawing their minds from that contemplation of the Divine being which was at times too much for the strength of their ordinary human faculties to bear without causing physical agony to the body. There seems to be some disagreement among writers of high spiritual science as to which is the higher state of contemplation: that which causes this kind of suffering to the body; or that which transcends all consciousness of the body. The author of *Sancta Sophia* (Treatise 3, Sect. 3, Chap. 6, §§ 22, 23) favours the latter state of contemplation, it would seem, and makes a peculiar commentary upon the other: "The tree of love is in no sort to be plucked up by the roots as long as there is any hope that it may be in a disposition or capacity to bring forth more fruit." The special instance he gives of the character or condition of the one kind of contemplation, and the doubt he puts upon the characteristics of the other kind, illustrates this point too well to be passed over without a full quotation.

"Harphius relates an account that one brother Roger, a devout Franciscan, gave of himself, saying that a hundred times in a Matins he was in spirit drawn upwards to a more high knowledge of divine secrets; all which tracts he forcibly resisted, being assured that if he had given his soul free scope to fix the eye of the understanding upon those objects so represented to him, he should have been so plunged in the abyss of the divine incomprehensibility, and so wholly driven out of himself, that he should never have been able to have retired himself alive from such a contemplation."

"The same Harphius describes the state of some other souls (*not so sublimely elevated*) who yet are so languishing in their love of God, and in such an impatient ardour and thirst after Him, that it makes the body to faint and quite wither away, and therefore he calls them Martyrs of

mental and spiritual) and makes for health,"<sup>1</sup> is a fact which most common-sense people are continually asserting. There is a kind of general admission now made that the weak mind is the commonest cause of the weak body; or that weakness and sickness in the latter are often caused by a disharmony of the mind with its surrounding physical or moral conditions. An eminent physician employed as a public health officer, when asked recently the main cause of the prevalence of a certain contagion among the lower classes, curtly replied, "Thinking about it"; which was by no means a declaration of his personal belief in "mental science," but merely affirmed the most well established fact of medical science, that the will plays not only an important part in overcoming the effects of physical suffering or sickness, but even in producing them.

But the whole subject of suffering, both in its spiritual

Love. Now, by this languishing love, I conceive, is understood a love much in sensuality (though the object thereof be God), and it is exercised about the heart much after the same manner that a violent but chaste love is oft exercised between absent persons of different sexes, so that I take it to be the highest degree of *sensible* devotion. Now, though Harphius says that such Martyrs of Love, *dying corporally through the extremity of passion*, do immediately pass into heaven, having been already purified in the purgatory and fire of love; notwithstanding, although no doubt such souls do die in a most secure state, yet it *may be they will not escape some degree of purgatory for their indiscreet yielding to the impulses of nature in the exercising of this love*, which, though truly divine is yet far less perfect than that pure love which, in perfect contemplation, is exercised in the intellectual soul, *without any sensible change or redundancy of the body*." The words have been italicized to illustrate more pointedly the difference which this author is repeatedly insisting upon in the perfect and imperfect kind of contemplation.

<sup>1</sup> *Christian Science*. By John Churchman. *Atlantic Monthly*, April, 1903.

and physical relations, has to-day become so involved with speculation, first, as to its psychological characteristics — which the cult of “mind cure” has very much exploited and popularized the knowledge of — next in its physical conditions, the analysis of which by recent medical science has swept down the traditions of centuries in regard to our proper attitude towards it — putting common sense and hygienic principles at the bedside of suffering in the place so long occupied by sentimentality and drugs; but most of all has this question of suffering been affected in its relations to our spiritual nature by the disposition of our time to throw off the moral restraints of the past. Some kind of definite conclusions on this subject may yet be reached by both physical and psychological experimentalists in their different departments; or they may finally meet in a common conclusion. But in its spiritual relations “the mystery of suffering, like that of longing, may never be revealed.” If, however, the purely physical characteristics of suffering have been for centuries obscured by misapprehensions at which medical science to-day stands aghast, suffering, in its relations to our spiritual life and growth, has been invested with characteristics and significances that are almost absolute perversions of the great mystic principle that underlies the Christian theory of the value of pain. Though this principle is shrouded in a mystery so deep as to be beyond the reach of words, the sense of it has been authoritatively affirmed in terms which can have no meaning at all if not a literal one: — *If*

*you live according to the flesh, you shall die: but if by the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live.*<sup>1</sup> Saint Paul was not limiting his words to a purely mystical sense here; but was referring to the law of both the natural and the supernatural life: — *The law of the spirit of life, in Jesus Christ, hath delivered us from the law of sin and of death.*<sup>2</sup> “The law of the spirit of life” is to live. “The wisdom of the spirit is life and peace.” It is by this “wisdom of the spirit” that we learn how to live and grow, both in soul and body, through suffering, rather than to sicken and die under it.

The value of suffering to spiritual growth needs no defence; it is too apparent to both common sense and reason; but the value of suffering, or, more explicitly, the *love* of suffering for its own sake, or from the mistaken notion that it is to be sought as a necessary concomitant of spiritual perfection, — this is a question that seems obscured with hopeless misunderstandings. Asceticism, mortification, suffering in their misconstrued sense and purpose, have done more mischief in turning souls against Christianity and the higher life, as their contrary qualities of Hedonism, indulgence, and pleasure have done in directly luring souls from Christ. The sneer of the Epicure has been hardly more of a reproach to the true principles underlying the purpose and practice of these Christian virtues than have been certain misconceptions and misapplications of them among a number of Christians even in our own day, not

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 8: 13.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 8: 2.



to speak of some of the mistaken notions of other times in regard to Christian asceticism. To illustrate this statement by actual examples might be an easy, but it would be a most unpleasing, task; as is attention to any subject which presents itself first to our mind in its pathological aspect. The practical Christian temper of to-day has a healthy way of shaking off any ideas which might lead to morbid reflections; and it will not brook having certain aspects of the Christian life which seem to have no personal application to itself; which it cannot interpret out of the facts of its own experience, and which it has no curiosity to study in the experience of others, thrust upon it for consideration. One of the widest differences between the temper of the Christian mind, past and present, is found right here. The disposition of the past was to adapt or assimilate and to judge from the experience of others — without stopping to test its own capacity for applying that experience to itself; the disposition of the present is, to judge from its own experience; make its own experiments; adapt from them what it finds is consonant with its own constitution, — either spiritual or physical, — in the manner that it would select and test the food most suitable to its digestion, and to reject the rest, or at least to feel no interest in it as having any personal application to itself.

The actual causes for this difference of disposition between Christians of the past and of the present may be perhaps the better understanding we have to-day of both the physical and the psychological conditions



of our being. The phenomena in both fields have been too well classified and knowledge about them has become too common for us to get things mixed up so easily as the less informed Christians of other times were apt to when analyzing the different phases of their religious emotions. Not only this, but a different attitude towards manifestations of suffering in others has been brought about by the more general refinement in thought and æstheticism in feeling which popular education has effected in a large measure. While this does not necessarily argue that the human disposition to-day is in general kinder and more sensitive to suffering, and more reluctant to behold the manifestations of suffering in others, it does seem to show that we place *physical* pain in a lower grade of suffering than it occupied in the past; and that we have come to regard real suffering as a condition more of the mind than of the senses; in other words, that the mind's attitude towards suffering is what determines the character and strength of physical agony. This discrimination or analysis of the different characteristics of suffering has developed a certain kind of heroism amongst us in enduring pain; as though such endurance were a mark of superior character and of strength both of mind and will. Not that this is a new or modern estimate of physical heroism; but endurance with us has an added degree of heroism which it lacked in the past. Since we have come to think that the endurance of physical agony may not always be the measure of a person's sensitiveness — but may perhaps give evidence of only

a coarser physical fibre — we have acquired the habit of considering physical suffering, or its endurance by ourselves or others, as a subject not for common discussion; and in fact have relegated it to that class of topics which good taste and refined feelings prohibit consideration of except among those who take up the study of these topics either for professional or charitable reasons.

All this has affected the Christian mind of to-day to a radical extent in its estimate of the value of voluntary, or self-inflicted, physical pain. This change amounts indeed almost to utter revolt against many of the practices common among Christians of former times in their methods of spiritual culture. The present instinct against such practices is not a reprehensible one; and, even according to contemporary spiritual writers of former times, it has much justification. Any tendency which moves the human consciousness in the direction of interior rather than exterior religious experience is a step towards higher spiritual development.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> That these external and voluntary mortifications of the past were not always esteemed, even at that time, as highly as the practice of interior mortification, or the utter ignoring of the lower nature, is distinctly shown by the statements on this point given in many chapters of *Sancta Sophia* — a guide book on the spiritual life which might seem a more consistent product of the “mental culture” of our own time, than that of the seventeenth century, in which it was written. Following are a few of these statements:

“The way of mortification practised by internal contemplative lives is different from that of active (spirits), though these live in a religious state, and (are) well advanced in active exercises; for (the latter) endeavour to mortify their inordinate affections by combating them purposely and

Most of this modern prejudice, however, against ancient methods of ascetic practice is to be blamed on to the wrong interpretations of the motive which instigated self-inflicted suffering, not only in the case of ordinary Christians, but in the saints themselves.

Practically speaking, — and to give a single illustration of the difference between their mental attitude and ours towards physical ill, — unconsciousness of danger

directly, whereas contemplative souls do indirectly, yet far more efficaciously, mortify their passions by transcending them, that is, by elevating and uniting their spirit to God, with the help of pure intellectual actuations; by this means forgetting and drowning both their sensual desires, yea, all created things, and *chiefly themselves* in God; so that in a temptation they do not turn themselves towards the object, to the end to resist and contradict it, but by a vigorous act of resignation and love they convert their spirits unto God, scorning even to cast a regard or glance upon creatures that would allure their affections from God. . . .

“But as for voluntary mortifications (those I mean which are properly such) we have nothing to do with them, yea, moreover, I should never persuade a spiritual disciple . . . though he had a body as strong as Samson . . . to extraordinary mortifications, unless some special occasion required them for a remedy against special temptations then assaulting him; in which case they are not indeed to be esteemed extraordinary and voluntary (although supernumerary), but, considering the present state, ordinary and necessary.”

Even in such an extreme case as that of *necessary* mortification (as he here defines necessity) this author is jealous of the encroachment of the external act upon the inner consciousness, or of what he calls the “inconveniences attending . . . the use of such mortifications, which are much greater to a life of contemplation than an active life, because liberty of spirit is much more necessary in the former than in the latter, (and this) liberty is extremely prejudiced by such unnecessary obligations and fetters laid by a soul upon herself. For this reason the supernumerary mortifications which may prove more useful, and which are least prejudicial to this liberty, *are those that least work upon the mind.* . . . And of all others, the most beneficial are those that regard the *non-doing*, as more silence, more solitude, etc., than a person by regular ordinances is obliged to.” — Treatise 2, Sect. 1, Chap. 4, § 8. *Ibid.*, Chap. 5, §§ 6, 13, 14.

was often the most effective protection that many of the saints and good Christians of former times had in their seemingly rash encounters with disease. In a recent notable publication by a specialist on bacteriology, the modern "germ craze" has been severely criticised; and the author "is very earnest in his protest against the horrid fear of germs which bacteriologists have instilled into the public mind. He insists that this fear is bad and uncalled for, that it makes people flee the sick, instead of helping them, and he asserts that in most cases where the *predisposition* does not exist, the germs are harmless enough. In other words, he does not believe in contagion. He insists on the importance of the *predisposition to disease* in the patient — the state of weakness which enables the parasite, which normally would be powerless, to gain the victory in what he calls the battle of organisms." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Physician Versus Bacteriologist*. By Professor Dr. O. Rosenbach of Berlin. Funk and Wagnalls Company.

He makes some peculiar comments on "fashions in medical practice, and the tendency after a furor for one treatment of a certain ailment to another furor for exactly the reverse treatment; which have some significance here as an illustration of the influence of the mental upon the physical characteristics of a period; his theory being that "the physical constitution of men changes from generation to generation in such a way as to make the medical methods of one time unfitted to the next — quite apart from any improvement in the rationale of those methods." He thinks, for instance, that "the period in which the practice of copious blood-letting arose was one of full-blooded and plethoric habit — that consequently blood-letting had at that time a reasonable excuse for popularity. But when a period of general anæmic habit followed, blood-letting, though the worst thing possible, was continued with dire effects for a season, viz., until the conservative doctors accumulated a sufficient body of sad experience to make a change."

That little phrase, "predisposition to disease," has been made the basis of a whole school of not only medical practice, but of "mental culture"; the former dealing with it in its physical relations, — working on hygienic lines of prevention of disease rather than elaborating methods of cure; — and the latter building up the hypothesis of the sound mind being the only necessary condition for the sound body. Neither school of theorists may claim our absolute credulity in their theories; yet both contribute no trifling testimony to the purely rational grounds on which we may in part explain that wonderful immunity from the fatal consequences of disease and suffering which distinguished the heroic lives of many saints, and even ordinary Christians of a former period, in their ministrations upon suffering humanity. But even if a saint of our own day were urged by zeal and charity to face these dangers, the knowledge of "germ" contact which he with the general public shares, might, according to present-day theorists, be sufficient to make him dread fatal consequences, and thus "predispose" him for an attack of the disease. Moreover, the knowledge of hygiene, which is now instilled into us in our very infancy, makes us by the sheer force of habit shun damage to our physical being by every wise precaution against contagion; and instantly suggests intelligent remedy when such damage has been inflicted. Modern medical science has helped so much to popularize hygienic principles of health, and has circulated so widely its rules for "First Aid to the Injured," that

transgressions against these is now really considered a public misdemeanour, and an offence against the neighbour as much as against oneself. Our Commissioners of Health are in fact empowered to restrain by law any such transgressions, and a heavy penalty would be inflicted on one who would rashly confront contagion without official warrant, and thus expose himself or others to danger. The warrant for the zealous charity of the past in rushing into such danger would not apply to our conditions of civilization now, when the establishment and enforcement of a Sanitary Code has radically changed both the character and method of charity's ministrations. It would to-day be considered a greater charity to co-operate with officials in charge of the public health in their efforts to prevent the spread of sickness and disease than to run unwarranted risks both with one's own or others' health by imprudent encounters with contagion in the effort to be personally charitable. Our case, then, is not the same as that of charitable persons in former times who lived under a dispensation of things in which the public health was for the most part a charge upon private benevolence.

While the rationale of pain and suffering has been practically affected by these changes in our civilization, the relations of the former to our spiritual welfare are fixed on principles that cannot change. Physical suffering in us is the penalty of sin — either present in us by our own transgressions, or by our heritage of sin's consequences. It cannot, therefore, be desired

for itself, or as the most perfect means of promoting our spiritual welfare. Surely the healing of sickness or the assuaging of pain is more to be desired than the power to endure their agonies; else we should not have known Christ as the Healer of the body as well as the Saviour of souls. The basis for the idea that suffering is itself to be desired and even sought, if one would grow spiritually, is the common belief that the most perfect way to imitate Christ or the saints is to imitate them in their sufferings. This, indeed, appears to be the way by which the saints themselves became like unto Christ. But this aspect of their sufferings is misleading; it is an inverted estimate of them. They did not become like Christ by suffering, but they suffered because they first became like Christ, — which is quite a different interpretation from that we most often find given by those who have not grasped the essential distinction between the method and the motive of sanctity. It might be put down as an axiom that we have really no clue to understanding the *physical* states of the saints — their sufferings, austerities, or any of their practices in fact — until we have mastered some knowledge of their mental or spiritual states, either by experience or by study of them. The whole cause of the misunderstandings and aversions and even condemnations in regard to these physical states of the saints is due in many cases to lack of the most elementary knowledge of their psychological conditions, not to speak of ignorance of their spiritual characteristics. Unfortunately, however, it is the



purely physical aspect of suffering which has been most emphasized in the past in delineating the character of sanctity; and the true spiritual character of sanctity has in this way become obscured. It is good to repeat that suffering in the saint is a *result* of sanctity, not a *cause* of it; and this is what constitutes the difference between the sinner's pain and the saint's. One is enduring *the penalty of love* — the other the penalty of sin. And there is as much difference in the character and degree of the pain as there is in the condition of the victims. Even rationally speaking, as we have seen, the finer the spirit the greater is its capacity for pain and the stronger is its power of endurance. It is only such spirits that can really fathom the depths of pain because they go far below the merely physical aspects and conditions of it to the sources from which it derives its keenest agonies; — and these do not relate to the body, but to the soul and spirit. The refined apprehension of a saint experiences a more poignant sympathy with the sufferings of Christ in proportion to his deeper knowledge or understanding of Christ's own motive in suffering; while the stronger and finer his apprehension grows the greater his capacity becomes for such spiritual experience, and the more enduring his power to surmount the effects of it. This we cannot doubt if we believe, as we must, that Christ's own Mother knew Him, loved Him, and felt for Him more than any or all the saints together. The very strength which enabled her to suffer saved her from succumbing to the effects of that suffering by



bodily dissolution. Perhaps no less a degree of spiritual strength than Mary had — as well as her exemption from that physical weakness which is one of the penalties of sin — would have prevented her dissolution when she “stood” beneath the cross.

Since it is not by the outward manifestations of suffering only that we can understand the true character of sanctity, or discover the secret of that love which was the deep source of all the saints’ own understanding and experience of Christ’s suffering, why should we then scan so closely only the outward characteristics of the saints, noting every natural trait and singularity of habit, perhaps blindly imitating these in our efforts to become like them, while all the time we neglect the only means by which we can attain any true apprehension of either their spirits or the spirit of Christ; and this is by the growth and refinement of our own spiritual faculties, and the development of our natural capacity for good. Every degree of such growth and development in us, either by natural or supernatural means, — the elimination of every narrow idea or selfish motive; the uplift of joy, the spur of hope, the impulse of love; small as well as great strivings of the spirit towards a larger capacity for and a freer correspondence with good; anything in which we feel the life of the spirit grow and expand and reach outwards in sympathy towards others, — these are the paths by which the soul travels, though afar off, in the wake of Christ and His saints; and by them the soul shortens the distance between itself and Christ more than it

would by a lifetime spent in dumb, uncomprehending imitation, in outward semblance only, of all the manifestations of sanctity witnessed in His life or the lives of His saints. These are the things that strengthen the spirit to endure the larger measure of suffering that refinement of spirit brings. Even the natural life of the body is strengthened and prolonged when "the wisdom of the flesh" which is "death," has been overcome by the "wisdom of the spirit," which is "life and peace."<sup>1</sup>

We need not refer only to the lives of veterans in sanctity, however, to establish the theory that the two great principles to which "an ancient illuminated monk, named Hesychius, reduced all spiritual duties, 1. Temperance; 2. Prayer,"<sup>2</sup> are the foundations of not only a holy, happy life, but a long and peaceful one. The scientific proofs of such a theory are being strengthened every day by the investigations and tests of both physiologists and psychologists. The attention now given to the study of dietetics, and of the effect of food upon the mental or spiritual states, is bringing in some striking testimony to the wisdom, not only of the

<sup>1</sup> "Internal prayer . . . cannot but cause some trouble and uneasiness to nature, and abate the vigourousness of the body, quenching those spirits and draining those humours *which are superfluous* and afford matter of temptations; yet, on the other side, it makes amends, even to nature itself, in contributing much to the prolonging of life by means of moderation of diet, a composedness of passions, and contentedness of mind, etc., which it causeth. Proofs whereof we have in the ancient holy fathers of the desert, and more lately in St. Romauld, who lived till he was a hundred and twenty years old, and St. David of Wales, till a hundred and forty, etc. — *Sancta Sophia*, Treatise 3, Sect. 3, Chap. 6, § 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Sancta Sophia*.

old ascetics, but to the Church's ancient rules and regulations in the matter of fast and abstinence. The diet of a latter-day disciple of "mental culture," and even of a large number of those who practise "health culture" for mere health's sake, would not have been considered nourishing enough by many an ancient anchorite in the desert. A treatment by no means uncommon among the former is to take an absolute "rest" from the digestion and assimilation of food of any kind for a continuous number of days, living entirely on good air and pure water during this period until the "normal condition" has been re-established. The ideal "normal condition" aimed at in such treatment is perfect harmony between mind and body, making peace, as it were, between them after some breach of friendly relations has been committed. This view illustrates the modern idea of the "perfect condition" of both mind and body; which refuses to admit the mediæval notion of the enmity between body and soul to be even a Christian conception; and in a large measure it is right; it is nearer to the ideal of a perfected humanity, both in the natural and the supernatural order. While it is as ready to condemn the sway or tyranny of the senses over the spirit as Saint Francis was when he bestowed his epithet of "Brother Ass" upon the body, it would at the same time prove in theory, — as the wise anchorites of old proved in practice, — that the spirit can master the body by a higher law than that of hatred for it; and that by the tyranny of the spirit over the body the latter may

become a more harmful enemy of the spirit, and may even defeat the spirit more easily than if they dwelt together as friends in the way God meant they should when he first arranged their partnership.<sup>1</sup>

And yet there remains to consider the mystic significance of that suffering of the spirit which slays the body; which flesh and blood cannot withstand when its tides sweep through the soul and break down all the mortal barriers that would resist them. This kind of suffering lies beyond the range of the merely physical phenomena of pain, and cannot really be interpreted or explained in the terms by which the latter is understood, and by which sympathy for it is communicated to our feelings. We can never understand rightly or sympathize adequately with the Passion of Christ by

<sup>1</sup> "The mind should not be above co-operation with the body. In fact, unless it does co-operate with the body the latter cannot be strong and healthy; and if the body is not strong and healthy what can the mind expect to be? In recent years it has become somewhat of a habit with a good many well-meaning people to say high-sounding things about the superiority of the mind over the body, the essential insignificance of the body, etc. Is it not time to emphasize the influence of the body upon the mind? Are we not constantly confronted by instances of the mind's dependence upon the body? What I would like to emphasize is that the mind and body are dependent upon each other. The mind cannot get out of the partnership, however much it may wish to do so. It must stay, and it must do its share or suffer, and generally suffer keenly. The further our civilization advances the more complete this interdependence becomes. Under our fashion of living, the body seems to require greater and greater attention from the mind, and the increasing mental strain assumed under our restless, hurrying life makes a greater and greater demand upon the vitality of the body. It is quite clear, then, that we are not in a position to talk about breaking the partnership. . . In time the proper management of the body *becomes largely unconscious and involuntary*. — *A Natural Method of Physical Training*. By Edwin Checkley, pp. 29, 30.

regarding only the *physical* phenomena of His sufferings. The ability to think with Him and feel with Him lies only in the growth of our souls toward a greater capacity for *being* like Him. This growth cannot be realized by artificial means, — by imitation, or the mere *appearance* of growth. We might *act* like another all the days of our life, without in the slightest degree *becoming* like that one; the external resemblance might be perfect while the inward being may be totally unchanged, — and this, too, not from any conscious intention of hypocrisy; but from the mere lack of development in the inward capacity to be like the one we would imitate. It was the growth in the *inward capacity* for being like Christ that by degrees made the saints take on those resemblances to Christ which appear to us the real marks of their sanctity. But in their case it was not a mere imitation of His characteristics that made them like Him, but the becoming, or transforming of their own natures into, not a resemblance of Him, but a *being* like Him. In this their efforts differ from those of ordinary Christians, who too commonly invert the order of the process by which sanctification is attained; and this word “Imitation,” in some of its misleading interpretations, is much to blame for wasted efforts and discouraging results in the strivings of Christian souls after perfection. A rule which might work wonders if it were wisely understood and applied in the pursuit of perfection is to eliminate the desire of imitating the object revered, and substitute the desire of *being* like that object;

refraining from imitation when no capacity for being has as yet been developed. What a sweeping defeat would overtake hypocrisy, and insincerity, and self-deception, with all the other dreadful caricatures of Christian virtue that bring shame upon the Christian name, if such a rule became of common practice; and how simple, and true, and humble, and how patient withal — knowing that patience perfecteth much that pride would condemn — the strivings of souls along the road of holiness might become, if this rule guided their steps.

From regarding these sufferings of the saints mostly in their physical aspects, the clue to their spiritual significance is often missed; and it is only with this clue in mind that we should even presume to approach to any understanding of them; this alone gives us the warrant to examine them; for they are manifestations of sanctity that lie outside the comprehension of the carnal mind, and should not be placed in the danger of being irreverently misunderstood. We ought at least to observe as much order and caution about these things as is practised in the pursuit of knowledge in the natural sciences. There are secret chambers, inner circles, in every school of knowledge into which only the initiated may penetrate. With what contempt and disgust do we regard those medical charlatans who have gone behind the veil of knowledge to learn the secrets of the life of the body only that they may use their knowledge afterwards to their own profit by displaying it to the ignorant and curious. There are inner

sanctuaries of the soul which must be veiled to the eyes of all but those who can read their mysteries aright; and an indiscriminate revelation of these mysteries before the eyes of the uncomprehending multitude has no more justification than would a like indiscretion in the natural order of knowledge.

The gauge by which the carnal mind measures the suffering of sanctity, not only gives it no clue to the significance of this suffering, but puts sanctity itself in a category which is infinitely below its rightful place. The greatest depths of pain are not reached by these higher spirits through the sufferings of the body; — the latter are mere accidents, often unconscious accompaniments of the spiritual realizations of the havoc wrought by evil in this world, which steep these souls in unutterable woe. They have become so related to the Divine plan and purpose in creation, through that clearer vision which has brought their own souls into sympathy and harmony with God, that the disruption of the Divine arrangement of things by the spirit of evil in this world is felt in their own being with a sensitiveness that wrings both body and soul with agony. By such agony have all God-loving souls at times been borne to the earth. It is the penalty of love, — for love is the wider vision, the clearer knowledge, the deeper understanding of God. Even the temptations of such spirits do not come from the lower nature, but from those higher faculties which make these spirits what they are: Heart-sickness at beholding the triumph of evil; reproachfulness against God that the wicked



should prosper and the innocent suffer; impatience with the Almighty that righteousness does not prevail by the power of His omnipotence throughout the whole earth. This is the burden of the complaints of the saints from the beginning until now: Job with his reproaches and upbraidings — “Why do the wicked live? . . . and the rod of God is not upon them”;<sup>1</sup> David, troubled and confident in turn by the Lord’s dealing with the evil-doer, “My feet were almost moved; my steps had well-nigh slipped . . . seeing the prosperity of sinners”;<sup>2</sup> yet giving that touching testimony at last to God’s loving care of His own: “I have been young, and now am old; and I have not seen the just forsaken, nor his seed seeking bread.”<sup>3</sup> And still more does Saint Paul give evidence of his suffering this higher kind of spiritual temptation: “For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood . . . but *against the spirits of wickedness in the high places.*”<sup>4</sup>

Of this kind are the deep and mysterious sources of that suffering of the spirit which is known only to those to whom it has become “meat and drink” to do the will of Him who sent them to this earth. And it is too obvious to need further illustration, that suffering like this can never be experienced by a mere imitation of its outward effects. Moreover, it is apparent that the inherent physical characteristics of a person must in a large measure indicate his capacity for these rarer phases of spiritual experience; in other words, that temperament and constitution have much to do with

<sup>1</sup> Job. 21: 7, 9.<sup>2</sup> Ps. 72: 2.<sup>3</sup> Ps. 36: 25.<sup>4</sup> Eph. 6: 12.



creating a capacity for spirituality of this order. This refinement of spirit seems incompatible with that kind of robust health which is incapable of feeling any physical effects from the domination of a subjective state of mind. There is a type of physical health which not only betrays unspirituality of character in the person possessing it, but almost suggests immorality in certain aspects of it. The refined and spiritual nature shrinks in its presence, and instinctively averts its gaze as from a temptation at the display of its merely physical strength and beauty. This type of physical perfection often raises the doubt as to whether spiritual development can even be begun in a soul which has never passed through any experience of the discipline of human suffering. It is certain that spiritual development in such types seldom reaches above a low grade, even though their moral nature may grow strong and upright.

There are finally the merits of suffering to be considered. But what merit is desired? If Christ is attained, is not all attained? Would we sit down and brood over the coin by which we purchased the treasure; or would we cast it gladly from us once we have won the prize? Merits are mere coupons, as it were, which show our efforts in winning this prize. The more avaricious we become over their accumulation, the more apt we are to forget that our aim is not to hoard them, but to purchase with them the prize we are seeking—for the possession of which “if a man should give all the substance of his house, he shall despise it as nothing.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Cant. of Cant.* 8: 7.

## IX

### THE LAW OF LOVE

Love therefore is the fulfilling of the law. — Rom. 13: 10.

#### SACRIFICE

THE human mother's blind, instinctive, unconditional giving of self-life for the life of her child, is the complete manifestation in the natural order of love's most fundamental law, self-sacrifice. It is the one thing in the natural order that supplies us with an analogy by which we can in some measure understand and interpret the character of love in the moral or spiritual order. It is far more perfect as an analogy by which to interpret Divine love, when it is rightly understood, than that other manifestation of love in human life, the love-passion between man and woman, which is so commonly used as a figure to describe a perfect union between the soul and God. Only some of the extraordinary and temporary phases of this latter kind of human love present characteristics that may serve as figures to illustrate the experiences of love in the spiritual order. They do not represent the essential character of love itself; they do not define its inherent nature, nor reveal its hidden laws. Nor is this aspect of love, this concrete conception of a union between

two mutually attracted human beings, true to the historic Christian idea of Divine Love. At least, no human experience of sex-love has ever presented an aspect of perfection impressive, chaste, and sublime enough for the Christian consciousness to accept it as an ideal image of the love between human and divine nature. The Pagan apotheosis of sex-love, which represented the summit of perfection and bliss to the idolatrous nations of pre-Christian times, has come down to us along a line of literary ideals and sentiments which have always been a peculiar contradiction to the traditional sentiments and aspirations that have formed, throughout the centuries, the Christian's conception of both earthly perfection and eternal beatitude.

Yet every other sentiment and aspiration of the human heart has been apotheosized by the Christian consciousness into a conception of perfected virtue which it would not demean the Divine to be clothed with. God is imagined as moved by mercy as we are merciful; kind, as we are kind; pitiful, loving, tender, like unto us when our hearts yearn toward our fellow creatures. The infinite difference of the sentiment as He feels it and as we feel it, we conceive as being more in degree than in kind. In the whole range of human life's experience there is but one relation of love between creatures which has not been raised into a sublimated form of itself by the Christian mind, in its efforts to conceive the Divine, until this relation has been divested of those very qualities and characteristics which alone would make it recognized as a perfect

type of this love-relation in the human order. Yet the qualities and characteristics of every other human relationship are enhanced and emphasized by the Christian mind when it would invest Divinity with a human form: If we think of God as a father, he is fatherly to the uttermost degree; if as a king, he is kingly to exaggeration; if as a judge, He lacks no characteristic of righteousness; if, in His humanity, we remember Him as a child, He is endowed with the full heritage of childhood's traits and circumstances. In a word, all the relations of human life are exemplified in the life of our Lord on earth save one: Jesus, the greatest prophet and exponent of love that the world has ever known, did not play the role of lover as human experience recognizes that character; and this fact must be evidence of some fundamental inadequacy or limitation in this human relationship that unfits it as a perfect figure by which to describe the character of a perfect union between God and the soul.

Not only is the personal history of Christ's human life lacking in any manifestation of a love that would give us warrant in depicting Him as the Archtype of a lover according to the conception of that character which human experience recognizes as the standard type, but the Gospels throughout, though they record every other phase of heart experience, every other characteristic of human and divine love, are silent about the love-relation between man and woman. To find a figure in the Scriptures that would illustrate the characteristics of the union of love between God and

the soul, according to this conception of it, spiritual writers have had to turn backward from the simple Gospel story of Divine love to the mystical allegories and obscure allusions of Old Testament writers. Here, in the dark history of unfaithful Israel, as described by Osee under the figure of human love degraded, repentant, and reclaimed, — “She decked herself out with her earrings, and with her jewels, and went after her lovers, and forgot me, saith the Lord. Therefore, behold I will allure her, and will lead her into the wilderness and I will speak to her heart”; — and in Solomon’s Cantic of Canticles has been found a type of Divine love expressed in human terms. So precariously suggestive, however, of the merely carnal emotion of love are these terms, that only the most spiritualized Christian consciousness may be trusted to interpret them as figures of the higher relations between God and the soul.

Yet the highest experience of love in the spiritual life, a state of perfect union with God, is described by masters of spiritual science as being a condition of consciousness in which conceptions of the mind or figures of the imagination play no part in the soul’s realization of God, though they previously may have contributed toward leading the soul to this high experience. The path by which the soul is led upward to this state is represented by such teachers as being safe and true only when its trend is away from that stage of spiritual experience in which the soul would be content to stay down in “the valley of vision,” and not

seek to climb upward to greater heights by the common way of faith, which asks no vision; hope, which

“holds the mortal way,  
And feels that faith cannot betray”;

love, which is led by faith and hope, and which with eager feet at last outruns them both when they faint and falter

“with weight of cares  
Upon the great world’s altar-stairs  
That slope through darkness up to God.”

As there is no directer road to God than by this common way of faith, hope, and love, so there is no way more secure against the errors and illusions of the human mind. “And the reason or ground of such security is evident, because a contemplative soul tending to God and working almost only with the heart and blind affections of the will pouring themselves upon God, apprehended only in the obscure notion of faith, not inquiring what He is, but believing Him to be that incomprehensible Being which He is, and which can only be comprehended by Himself, *rejecting and striving to forget all images and representations of Him*, . . . transcending all operations of the imagination, and all subtlety and curiosity of reasoning; and, lastly, seeking an union with God only by the most pure and intimate affections of the spirit: what possibility of illusion or error can there be to such a soul?”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sancta Sophia*, Treatise 1, Sect. 1, Chap. 3, § 2.

“By much practice the soul will arrive to that most sublime purity of prayer, wherein no image at all of the Divinity is mingled, and which

The value of love is not in the emotion or state of love itself, but in the fruits of that condition; in the things it leads one on to do; in the qualities and characteristics it develops: self-forgetfulness, self-sacrifice, tenderness for others, kindness, service, — these are some of the traits by which, even in the human order, the higher forms of love are known, rather than by the personal capacity of the individual for the emotion of love itself. "The story of the great passion is the story of those who have forgotten themselves and become absorbed in others; not to the extinction but to the fulfilment of personality. When the full music is evoked, the chord of self passes out of hearing; when the man rises to heroic heights of passion and devotion, he leaves himself behind as he climbs to the summit. In the degree in which we forget ourselves love thrives."<sup>1</sup>

Human love's upward tendency is evidenced by a diffusion of itself through all the avenues of its being leading outward to others, Self-sacrifice. Its downward tendency is characterized by an intense concentration upon its own emotion or upon whatever enhances its realization of that emotion, — Self-consciousness. The one tendency leads outward and upward forever, and there are no bounds or limits in the universe to mark a climax to its ecstasy. The other

will not admit the least memory, nor a character or representation of anything either spoken or done. . . . That prayer is not a perfect one, unless the religious person that exercises it be not able to give an account of his own thoughts that passed in it (or does not perceive that he prays)." — *Ibid.*, Treatise 1, Sect. 3, Chap. 4, § 11.

<sup>1</sup> *The Great Word.* — H. W. Mabie.

encompasses all its resources by one swift span of the short distance between the satisfaction of its own desires and the satiety which is their death. Love, then, cannot be an end in itself, nor its own consummated emotion the object of its desires. "It is the vice of amiable fanatics to treat love as in itself the supreme good, the end of the Christian life. . . . Love is a good, not on its own account, but on account of the excellence to which it clings; not because it sets the heart at one with *something*, but with something noble, true, and holy. Nobleness, truth, and holiness must therefore be higher than affection, being that to which it ought to spring. Where they are not made supreme and paramount, wherever love stays with mixed and lower objects and intercepts the view of these (virtues); wherever it learns to be satisfied with its tenderness and heedless of its purity, not only is its influence tainted, but its peace is spoiled by utter instability." <sup>1</sup> When character is developed to a high degree it demands these finer qualities in the object of its love. When it meets them in another it involuntarily springs to them with desire. Its love is attracted as much by the qualities as by the person possessing them. A falling off in these qualities in this person would kill love for the latter. How much higher is such a love than the blind impulse of passion which loves in spite of perfidiousness and dishonour in the object of its desires, like the unmoral brute led only by the low instincts of its animal nature.

<sup>1</sup> *Hours of Thought on Sacred Things.* By James Martineau; p. 311.



The history of these two tendencies in the human disposition, self-forgetfulness and self-consciousness, is the history of the world's progress in love. It is likewise the history of human nature's growth upwards to a larger capacity for spiritual things, a higher conception of spiritual values, a nobler idea of God. The development of the faculty of self-forgetfulness in the human consciousness has been brought about in the natural order through the agency of mother-love. This is the only kind of love in the human being which is naturally, instinctively, and almost altogether, self-forgetting. In its peculiar characteristics of giving more than can ever be returned to it in kind; in its all but indestructible constancy; in its unconditional giving of self, it bears a resemblance to Divine Love in a manner and to a degree of which no other human love is capable by nature. It has long been recognized as a simple fact of natural science, that in the world's moral growth, from the crudest beginnings of social order to the high development of our later civilization, the supreme agent, from a purely natural standpoint, has been the mother. While in the natural order this agency has been at work developing the human disposition from self-ism to other-ism, — altruism, love, — in the spiritual order likewise, an overmastering and irresistible example of self-sacrifice has been set before humanity, that steadily and unceasingly has borne in upon the religious consciousness of the race some understanding of the world-saving power of self-forgetting love. As the love-principle in natural life slowly worked its way

upward from the low underworld of mere animal appetites and impulses to the noble instinct of self-forgetfulness whose highest expression in the natural order is manifested in mother-love, so has the supreme act of Self-sacrifice which was consummated on Calvary set before humanity an ideal of love, a standard of goodness, in the contemplation of which man's consciousness has been drawn upward and away from the idea of self as the end and motive of all his aspirations and desires. The self-element as the predominating motive of personal salvation in the religious consciousness has grown less and less prominent, according as the measure of the soul's capacity has grown to understand the significance of Calvary's sacrifice as the Divine and eternal rebuke to "the monstrous heresy of self-worship, self-absorption, . . . which is *the essentially irreligious idea.*"

The growth of the religious or spiritual sense in man has been marked by an increase in the faculty to withdraw the mind from the thought of self, — the escape from that intense self-consciousness which followed upon man's awakening from the dumb brute unconsciousness of nature in the lower stages of being. This development has characteristics so marked that the most casual observation of human nature makes them plain to us. The painful self-consciousness of ignorant and undeveloped natures when for the first time they are aroused from blissful unconsciousness of their state to an apprehension of the penalties that may be entailed upon them by their ignorance and deficiency

is a phase of consciousness of which most human nature must at some time or other have had some experience. It is, too, associated in our minds more with our religious development than with our natural growth, though natural science would put it altogether in the categories of the latter: "When, in the process of mental development, self-consciousness arises, — a trial that probably did not come upon life until it attained to man's estate, — the creature finds itself in a miserable plight. Then for the first time the soul feels itself naked and alone in the world. The old impulses (of lower nature) join issue with the emotions which the sympathies (of higher nature) arouse. Then, it seems to me, awakens the sense of sin. The natural man is at war with the spiritual man, and the creature's self-hood grows sore from the conflict. No one of us but what has felt the almost mortal sickness which sometimes comes from the many varying moods of self-consciousness. Men seek some lightening of the burden wherever they can find it. They give themselves back to the unconsciousness that blessed their animal ancestors by means of alcohol or opium. They forget themselves on the battlefield or at the gaming table, or, in a better way, they seek escape in human fellowship, in some battle with nature, or in the exercises of religion, downward or upward, any way out of this torment of self."<sup>1</sup>

Thus are the characteristics of this desire for self-escape into something higher, which is at the very marrow of our being, explained by a purely rational-

<sup>1</sup> *The Interpretation of Nature.* By Nathaniel S. Shaler; p. 275.

istic interpretation of their phenomena. But we find a clearer interpretation of their meaning when we study this phase of human experience in the lives of those who have been accepted by the Christian world as types of the highest development of the religious consciousness since the beginning. The demonstration made by these lives is that the crowning achievement of sanctity is its final triumph over *self-consciousness*, its absolute forgetfulness of self and absorption with God.

## X

### THE LINEAGE OF LOVE

I am the Mother of fair love. — Eccles. 25: 24.

#### MOTHERHOOD

FROM the three great manifestations of the love-principle in human life, mother-love, sex-love, and God-love, spring those heart-impulses behind human action by which the race climbs upward or slips backward in its movement toward a higher, fuller destiny. For it is in the heart-life, after all, that mankind lives out its destiny and realizes its dreams. "Experience tells us that man's true life is neither lived in the material tracts of the body, nor in the higher altitudes of the intellect, but in the warm world of the affections. Till he is equipped with these man is not human. He reaches his full height only when Love becomes to him the breath of life, the energy of will, the summit of desire. There at last lies all happiness, and goodness, and truth and divinity." <sup>1</sup> We may hear of intellectual feats in the world of science, that promise to revolutionize human knowledge and invert the whole order of facts about human existence that it has taken centuries to arrange; yet, even if we are specialists or students in some particular department of science, which

<sup>1</sup> *Ascent of Man*, p. 215.

will be immediately affected by these discoveries, the news about them will not stir a pulse within us while we regard these facts only with a purely intellectual interest. But no sooner do we relate them to our physical life by calculating their effects upon any of the elementary conditions of the latter, say even the elementary necessities of food and drink; or to our moral life, by realizing how much these discoveries may simplify the struggle for existence both for ourselves and our fellows, — as in the case of great and useful mechanical inventions, — than our attention becomes alert, our senses quicken in the effort to perceive and realize the significance of this new knowledge, and we feel ourselves in the close grasp of a warm human interest about the least detail and the most remote application of the principles of these new discoveries to practical facts and conditions.

Ruled and ordered and enlightened though he may be by his intelligence, the springs of man's conduct arise from the love-principle at the bottom of his life. He may not be aware of the secret workings of this principle upon his nature, and of its subtile influence upon the preferences of his conscious mind; but the arrangement by which this principle was placed as the fundamental motive power at the basis of human life was made long before man had any conscious knowledge of such things as love and life and intelligence. While his mind was left free, or allowed to develop within itself the power of preference, of choosing a code of personal conduct, his heart-impulses took their

rise in beginnings of his being reaching so remotely back of his conscious existence that speculation about them might seem only fanciful to him, if not even distasteful. Human nature loves to believe it has absolute control over all its preferences, heart as well as head; that none of its impulses are altogether blind or involuntary or hereditary; and its pride in this prerogative of its free will to choose, to accept or reject, is a justifiable one. It is not, however, the will or choice of loving that is a blind or involuntary act in human nature: Man can love or hate with the same free will by which he can alternately eat or drink, or walk or stand. But the faculty of loving, the initial function of love itself in man's being, is a power which he had no more part in shaping than he had in laying the foundations of his physical life. As the laws of that life were working out the full complement of his physical being, all unaided and uninfluenced by his own personal and conscious choice, so the law of love within him, even at this early stage of his existence, was working in a secret confederacy with the law of life to prepare the soil from which the first seeds of love should spring when conscious being came to him with human birth.

“Love is not a late arrival, an after-thought with Creation. It is not a novelty of romantic civilization. It is not a pious word of religion. Its roots began to grow with the first cell of life which budded on this earth. How great it is, the history of humanity bears witness; but how old it is and how solid, how bound up with the very constitution of the world, how from

the first time an eternal part of it, we are only now beginning to perceive. . . . Love did not descend out of the clouds like rain or snow. It was distilled on earth. And few of the romances which in after years were to cluster round this immortal word are more wonderful than the story of its birth and growth. Partly a product of crushed lives and exterminated species, and partly of the choicest blossoms and sweetest essences that ever came from the tree of life, it reached its spiritual perfection after a history the most strange and checkered that the pages of Nature have to record. What love was at first, how crude and sour and embryonic a thing, it is impossible to conceive. But from age to age, with immeasurable faith and patience, by cultivation continuously repeated, by transplantings endlessly varied, the unrecognizable germ of this new fruit was husbanded to its maturity, and became the tree on which humanity, society, and civilization were ultimately borne.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ascent of Man*, p. 216.

“As the story of evolution is usually told, Love — the evolved form of the Struggle for the Life of Others — has not even a place. Almost the whole emphasis of science has fallen upon the opposite — the animal Struggle for Life. Hunger was early seen by the naturalists to be the first and most imperious appetite of all living things, and the course of Nature came to be erroneously interpreted in terms of a never-ending strife. Since there are vastly more creatures born than can ever survive, since for every morsel of food provided a hundred claimants appear, life to an animal was described to us as one long tragedy; and Poetry, borrowing the imperfect creed, pictured Nature only as a blood-red fang. Before we can go on to trace the higher progress of Love itself, it is necessary to correct this misconception. . . . To interpret the whole course of Nature by the Struggle for Life is as absurd as if one were to define the character of St. Francis by the tempers of his childhood. Worlds grow up as well as infants; their tempers change, the better nature opens out, new objects of desire appear, higher activities are added to the lower. The first chapter or two of the story of evolution may be headed the Struggle for Life; but take the book as a whole and it is not a tale of battle. It is a love-story.” — *Ibid.*, 217.



The mysteries of human life and love are explained to us in one set of terms by the physiologist; in another, no less technical and profound, by the psychologist; and in still another, more mysterious and baffling still, by the theologian. Yet, after we have pondered and probed the significance of these terms, and have tried to apply them to the actual facts of human experience, the inadequacy of their words in conveying the living sense of it all to our minds leaves us vaguely discouraged and dissatisfied. We feel that the measure of human life and love cannot be taken this way, or that a set of formal terms cannot convey to our understanding the real application of these principles to our personal lives. This is a case where theory teaches nothing; where personal experience alone can bring understanding of even the most primary facts. Here is a department of experience in which knowledge itself and wisdom and intelligence have sometimes been made to play the fool in order to fathom more deeply the meaning of love's mysterious power in human life. And even after such personal experience knowledge and wisdom are as helpless as ever to convey that meaning to others. Yet, as we have seen, while love is something that never can be taught, the human heart learned its lessons in love by a tuition that began with the inception of life itself.

"Tis even thus;  
In that I live I love; because I love  
I live: whate'er is fountain to the one  
Is fountain to the other; and whene'er

Our God unknits the riddle of the one  
There is no shade or fold of mystery  
Swathing the other." <sup>1</sup>

Strange it is that this most primary experience of human life, the power of loving, should have become so widely associated with that single phase of love-experience which comes only with maturity, as, practically, to limit all interest in the subject to this transitory manifestation of it alone. The world has come to think lightly of love, because love has been presented to it only in an aspect of lightness, of transitoriness; an experience in human life which is a mere passing phase of feeling; something which comes to-day and is gone to-morrow; a spasmodic, sporadic thing; a mere efflorescence of the hot blood of youth or passion; in short, an emotional condition, to which all human nature is subject under the proper conditions, — as it would be subject to certain physical afflictions, — but which it is best to escape if one can; and which it is becoming to be ashamed of if one cannot. These are some of the aspects in which the world commonly misrepresents love; and by which it has succeeded, not only in lowering and distorting the ordinary mind's conception of the true character of love, but has built up a misapprehension of love's origin and love's function in human life that tends to frustrate some of the holiest designs of God upon the race of man.

The poetic, no less than the scientific and materialistic view of love, has helped to lead the world astray

<sup>1</sup> Tennyson.

in its understanding of this "supreme dynamic" in human existence. All these influences have combined to establish the notion that love has its birth in human life at a point in the experience of that life when the *consciousness* of love first awakens in the heart; when the emotions feel for the first time the stir of this consciousness running like a new tide of life through the faculties of heart and soul and body. This, in the commonest poetic parlance, is "the awakening of love." And this, laughs the cynical world, is the beginning of the end of love; this, it believes, is the first stage in the human heart's experience of life's supreme delusion; a delusion, which, at the same time, by an irony of fate, is life's supreme delight.

On account of this world-wide misapprehension of love's origin in human life, and of that ignorance or indifference which refuses to understand or to examine the deeper and more vital relations of love to human destiny, the subject has lost caste, so to speak, as a theme for serious consideration. Discussion of it is distrusted by the sincere and ridiculed by the frivolous; a wall of diffidence blocks almost every avenue of approach to it, except to those to whom diffidence is a sham and modesty a stranger: the shallow-hearted worldling, the callous-minded cynic, the conscienceless and shameless novelist of a prurient literature to whom the theme of love is merely a stock in trade. These have become the only prophets and exponents of love that the world knows to-day; — the poor, sad world, that is trying in its disgust and disappointment to get

along without love since this is all there is to it: a hollow delusion and a snare; a joke upon poor humanity, that affords endless "copy" for the professional humorist; a monumental mistake in the economy of human existence, that seems to be set there for no other purpose than to prepare a trap into which men and women blunder like blind victims, to their certain disappointment and chagrin, if not to their utmost despair and disaster. The world is tired of it all, and it has turned from love for many a day as a thing of secondary importance in human affairs. Humanity has long been searching in other directions to satisfy the deeper cravings and aspirations of the heart. The world of the emotions has been forsaken for the world of mind; the pursuit of knowledge has replaced the ancient quest of love. This quest of love is now regarded as a folly of the past, an early trait of the world's unwise youth when love was the only law that ruled both little and great; when kings would leave their thrones at its beck and sober statesmen would not be ashamed to follow its behests before the face of all. All this has been left behind in the world's progress towards knowledge, — for in the realm of learning the throne is not raised to love but to mind, and love will rule as king or will not rule at all.

With love no longer king in the high places of this world; no longer recognized as the sole and mighty arbiter of human destiny; wandering as an outcast from the frozen, childless homes where knowledge rules, — knowledge which taught the world how to banish love

with all its sweet benedictions, — a great cruelty has grown up in the world to-day. It is not the cruelty of the red fang or the sharp claw; but a vast nameless something that we feel strike into us at times like the biting thrust of steel; that seizes us at moments as with the unyielding grip of iron, that would rend our living hearts into bleeding shreds if we dare to falter or to stumble in this race of the swift and this battle of the strong; that crushes the warm life out of us by a merciless and cruel repression of every natural instinct and human impulse, outreaching and upspringing from our hearts in love and kindness towards our fellow creatures. The world to-day takes pride in scorning sentiment; it boasts of its ability to overcome emotion and to act from the conviction of the mind alone. It would be shamefaced at offering a sentimental reason as a sufficient motive for any act in human life. All conduct must be dictated by sanctions endorsed by practical reasons in order to win respect. Not that the age has formally repudiated love or sentiment as the sufficient motive power for human conduct; but it has succeeded in weakening the function of love in human life by a check upon love's forces which must lead them in the end to inevitable defeat and death. There is a deeper cause for this world-coldness of our age than we are wont to recognize when we characterize it as merely the scientific spirit of the time; or the business spirit; or the disposition for the practical which prevails among us. These terms are mere evasions of the real cause lying back of the conditions.

Neither science, nor business, nor the practical have alone or together wrought this change in the human disposition. This chill upon the heart of mankind to-day is from the dearth of love amongst us; — *it is the chill from childless homes*, the coldness from loveless unions between men and women; the heartlessness from homes built upon the ruins of other homes devastated by divorce and dishonour. This is where the defeat of love's supremacy over the human heart takes its rise; here at the very source of love, the very springs of life itself; the shrine of the family, the heart of the home, the cradle of love in the mother's breast have been profaned and desolated by the scourge of divorce in our modern civilization, till the whole world shivers as in a mortal chill. Our social organism has been shaken to its foundations by the fierce divisions and disputes that this problem of divorce has created amongst us. Civil and religious law has been mocked at and defeated in its attempt to legislate against this terrible evil. Churches have been split into bitter factions over some technical difference of opinion as to where the vital principles of this problem lay. But how useless it has all proven to be in enforcing upon men and women any sense of their own obligations both to themselves and to their fellow beings. Legislation has proved a farce in its attempt to regulate this evil; and both moral and religious influences seem powerless to check the inroads of it upon the peace and happiness of mankind. The trouble is that results only have for the most part been attacked in dealing with this prob-

lem; while the sources of the evil have either been ignored or overlooked. This is not the way the modern intelligent mind works with mistakes and misfortunes in other departments of human life. The scientific spirit has at least taught us one good and great condition for reform or restoration of perverted forces in life, and this is the discovery of the real *cause* of the perversion, — physical, moral, or mental, — before we attempt to deal with the perversion itself. In the world of social reform, almost as much as in the medical world to-day, the initial lesson is, “find the germ.” But in this war upon divorce who thinks of talking about that awful perversion of the laws of life and love with which modern marriage, entered into by men and women with no higher motive than a cold, calculating self-interest or self-gratification dictates, has blighted the world with thousands upon thousands of loveless, lonely homes, in which the voices of children are never heard; where there is no sweet school of affection and unselfishness and self-sacrifice, founded upon the only secure and permanent basis on which love can build its principles into the human life, — the love of child for parent and parent for child. The only lasting bond of love is mutual self-sacrifice; and when love’s most primary law is broken, — the law upon which the whole of living creation has moved forward from the beginning until now, — it is only natural, and consistent, and inevitable, that some terrible hiatus should occur in human conditions, some impulse towards division, antagonism, disruption, that should rend the very



vitals of civilization and break down the holiest sanctions of the ages in its erratic tendency towards the disorganization of the social body. Divorce and dishonoured vows and broken lives will go on heaping up the record of human sorrow and misfortune until men and women learn and realize that the laws of love are as inexorable in inflicting penalty, merciless and dire, upon those who mock them and break them with impunity, as are the very foundation laws of life itself. Until they know and take to heart this fact, — which is no mere lesson of the moral law grafted upon civilization in its later development, and serving the race as a mere economic expedient, but which is one of nature's grand primordial facts, — that, as the way to banish love from the human race is to tear up its roots in the heart of the mother, so the only way by which love is perpetuated in the human race is by its lineal descent from mother to child and child to mother; that the world will forget how to love *when the mother forgets her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb*; that the human heart not only learns the alphabet of love at the mother's breast, but that in the brief unconscious span of existence, when the mother and child are as one, and during the dumb helpless years of infancy, the human heart unconsciously compresses into its own individual experience the accumulated experience of the race in the deep lessons of love; that it dimly, yet with an intimate and abiding knowledge, learns all the wondrous ways by which love has striven, in its unceasing impulses throughout the ages, since its



first awakening in a human soul, to grow eloquent of itself in outward manifestation. "When the first mother awoke to her first tenderness and warmed her loneliness at her infant's love, when for a moment she forgot herself and thought upon its weakness or its pain, when by the most imperceptible act or sign or look of sympathy she expressed the unutterable impulse of her motherhood, the touch of a new creative hand was felt upon the world. However short the earliest infancies, however feeble the sparks they fanned, however long heredity took to gather fuel enough for a steady flame, it is certain that once this fire began to warm the cold hearth of Nature, and give humanity a heart, the most stupendous task of the past was accomplished. A softened pressure of an uncouth hand, a human gleam in an almost animal eye, an endearment in an articulate voice—feeble things enough. Yet in these faint awakenings lie the hope of the human race."<sup>1</sup>

No word of love has ever been uttered by human lips but some mother of the past crooned its tender syllables into her babe's unheeding ear; from the warm pressure of a mother's arms and the soft caress of a mother's lips the human instinct for love-expression received its first training in the arts of affection even before any other faculty of consciousness had reached the crudest stage of development. Yet not alone in the merely physical expression of love is motherhood the first tutor of the affections. Through the wide portal of a mother's heart have come the noble train

<sup>1</sup> *Ascent of Man*, p. 290.

of human virtues that have raised the race from we know not how crude and degraded a stage in physical and moral being up to that high estate which in its perfect flowering in the souls of the redeemed, has made men only a little less than the angels. The history of the Mother is the record of man's redemption. This is true not only in the sense of those profound teachings of the Church which interpret the meaning of the Incarnation in terms which seem to some to convey only a conception of the maternity of the Virgin Mother of God; but it is true in a sense which includes every interpretation of the history of mankind. It is fundamentally true in a physical and moral sense; and in a spiritual sense its truth reaches from the lowest depths of life's mystery to the highest concept of that mystery that has ever been defined. "From of old we have heard the monition, 'except ye be as babes ye cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven'; the latest science now shows us that unless we had been as babes, the ethical phenomena which give all its significance to the phrase 'Kingdom of Heaven' would have been non-existent for us. Without the circumstances of infancy, we might have become formidable among animals through sheer force of sharp-wittedness. But except for these circumstances we should never have comprehended the meaning of such phrases as 'self-sacrifice' or 'devotion.' The phenomena of social life would have been omitted from the history of the world, and with them the phenomena of ethics and religion." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fiske, *Cosmic Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 363.

"Love then had no chance till the human mother came. To her alone was given a curriculum prolonged enough to let her graduate in the school of the affections. Not for days or weeks, but for months, as the cry of her infant's helplessness went forth, she must stand between the flickering flame and death; and for years to come, until the budding intellect could take its own command, this love dare not grow cold, or pause an hour in its unselfish ministry.

"Begin at the beginning again and recall the fact of woman's passive strain.<sup>1</sup> A tendency to passivity means, among other things, a capacity to sit still. Be it but for a minute or an hour, does not matter; the

<sup>1</sup>"The fact is everywhere emphasized in nature, that a certain constitutional difference exists between male and female, a difference inclining the one to a robuster life, and implanting in the other a certain mysterious bias in the direction of what one can only call the womanly disposition.

"Now out of this initial difference — so slight at first as to amount to no more than a scarcely perceptible bias — have sprung the most momentous issues. For by every detail of their separate careers the two original tendencies — to outward activity in the man; *to inward activity*, miscalled passivity, in the woman — became accentuated as time went on. The one life tended towards selfishness, the other towards unselfishness. While one kept Individualism alive, the other kept Altruism alive. Blended in the children, these two master-principles, from this their starting-point acted and reacted all through history, seeking that mean in which true life lies. . . . The passage from mere Other-ism, in the physiological sense, to Altruism in the moral sense, occurs in connection with the due performance of her natural task by her to whom the Struggle for the Life of Others is assigned. That task, translated into one great word, is Maternity — which is nothing but the Struggle for the Life of Others transfigured, transferred to the moral sphere. Focussed in a single human being, this function, as we rise in history, slowly begins to be accompanied by those heaven-born psychical states which transform the femaleness of the older order into the Motherhood of the new."—*Ascent of Man*, pp. 257, 258.

point is that the faintest possible capacity is there. For this is the embryo of Patience, and if much and long nursed, a fully fledged Patience will come out of it. Supply next to this new virtue some definite object on which to practise — a Child. When this child is in trouble, the mother will observe the signs of pain. Its cry will awaken associations, and in some dull sense the mother will feel with it. But ‘feeling with another’ is the literal translation of the name of a second virtue — Sympathy. From feeling with it, the parent will sooner or later be led to do something to help it; then it will do more things to help it; finally it will be always helping it. Now, to care for things is to become Careful; to tend things is to become Tender. Here are four virtues — Patience, Sympathy, Carefulness, Tenderness — already dawning upon mankind.”<sup>1</sup>

While these facts of natural history help to bring more vividly to the mind the reality of maternity’s divine mission to the human race, the record written on every human heart which has felt and known the care and kindness of a mother keeps offering its silent testimony to the world that the influence of the mother upon the individual life is deeper and farther reaching than any other element that enters into life’s experience. The mere statement of this fact sounds trite, so commonly is it taken for granted. But the explanation of its principles and of their relation to our personal lives can but fill us with awe and wonder.

“In the long stillness which follows the crisis of

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 288.

Maternity, witnessed only by the new and helpless life which is at once the last expression of the older function and the unconscious vehicle of the new, Humanity is born. By an alchemy which remains, and must ever remain, the secret of Nature, the physiological forces give place to those higher principles of sympathy, solicitude, and affection, which from this time onwards are to . . . determine a diviner destiny for the human race: <sup>1</sup>

“Earth’s insufficiency  
Here grows to event;  
The indescribable  
Here it is done;  
The Woman-soul leadeth us  
Upward and on.” <sup>2</sup>

Yet the poets of the world have sung but little of this great silent love that lies close to the heart of the race and goes deeper into the roots of being than all the wild impulses of human passion that ever shook the soul of man or woman. These are but the running of the tides of love upon the shores of life, in ebb and flow, that at times, it is true, seem to break over being with a potency of strength so terrible as to threaten life itself. But love’s tides are held to the foundations of life by a power stronger than mere transient passion; and their source runs too deep into the heart of being for the impulses of this passion to drain their depths. “Love is eternal; Sex, transient. Its unbridled expression in individual natures, and its recklessnesses

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 259.

<sup>2</sup> *Faust*, Pt. ii.

when thwarted, have given rise to exaggerated ideas of its power. In all uncontrolled forms, however, it becomes so immediate a menace to social order, that if it does not die out in self-destruction, it is checked by the community and forced into lawful channels." . . .

"The idea that the existence of sex accounts for the existence of love is untrue." ". . . . In lower nature, as a simple fact, male and female do not love one another; and in the lower reaches of human nature, husband and wife do not love one another. . . . Among savage peoples the phenomenon everywhere confronts us of wedded life without a grain of love."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The savage cruelty with which wives are treated by the Australian aborigines is indicated even in their weapons. The very names 'Servant,' 'Slave,' by which the Brahman address their wives, and the wife's reply, 'Master, Lord,' symbolize the gulf between the two. There are exceptions, it is true, and often touching exceptions. Travellers cite instances of constancy among savage peoples which reach the region of romance. Probably there never was a time, indeed, nor a race, when some measure of sympathy did not exist between husband and wife. But when we consider all the facts, it is impossible to doubt that in the region of all the higher affections the savage wife and the savage husband were all but strangers to each other. . . .

"To give love time, indeed, has been all along, and through a great variety of arrangements, the chief means of establishing it on the earth. Unfortunately, the lesson of Nature here is being all too slowly learned even among nations with its open book before them. In some of the greatest of civilized countries . . . marriages are made only by a higher kind of purchase, and the supreme step of life is taken in the dark. . . . In primitive times there was no such thing as courtship. Men secured their wives in three ways, and in uncivilized nations so find them still. Among barbarous nations marriage is not a case of love, but of capture; among the semi-barbarous it is a case of barter; and among the imperfectly civilized — among whom we must often include ourselves — a matter of convention. The second of these, the purchase system — a slightly evolved form of marriage by capture — is one through which all human marriage has passed; and relics of it still exist in the *dos* and other

"Love then is no necessary ingredient of the sex relation; it *is not the outgrowth of passion.*" Hacckel's "elective affinity of differing cells," says the author of these quotations, is not "the physical basis of Altruism, though it may be the physical basis of a passion which is frequently miscalled Love; but Love itself, in its true sense as *Self-sacrifice*, Love with all its beautiful elements of sympathy, tenderness, pity, and compassion, has come down a wholly different line. . . . Love is love, and has always been love, and has never been anything lower. Whence, then, came it? If neither the Husband nor the Wife bestowed this gift upon the world, who did? It was A Little Child. . . . One day from its mother's very heart, a child drew forth the first fresh bud of a Love which was not a passion, a Love which was not selfish, a Love which was an incense from its Maker, and whose fragrance from that hour went forth to sanctify the world." <sup>1</sup>

The Mother is not only the great progenitor of Love in human life, but love's roots have been planted so deep in the heart of the race by the growth of motherhood throughout the ages, as to make the faculty of symbols among nations with whom the custom of buying a bride has long since passed away. By degrading the object of barter to the level of a chattel, this system is a barrier to high affection. And in most cases this is heightened by the impossibility of that preliminary courtship which leads to mutual knowledge and intelligent love. The bride and bridegroom, in the extremer cases, meet as total strangers; and though affection may bud in after years, the mingling of unknown temperaments, together with the destruction of reverence for woman by treating her as an article of barter, make the chances small of it blossoming into a flower."

—*Ibid.*, pp. 301, 303.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 306.



loving, in our later generation of human lives, a ruling force that must work out either our salvation or destruction. The heart that has learned to love at a mother's breast cannot, even if it would, live without love in some form that may satisfy, or at least feed the craving for affection which was left within it, which grew with its growth and strengthened with its years, when the mother love of childhood passed into the colder affection of maturity, and the loss of love's closer grasp upon its life only created the void that a later and more passionate realization of love can fill. These are not merely poetic imaginings, but simple facts, by which some least fragment of Love's mystery may be borne in upon the understanding, — a mystery which is the despair of human words to express,

“Love lieth deep: Love dwells not in lip-depths.  
Love wraps its wings on either side the heart,  
Absorbing all the incense of sweet thoughts,  
So that they pass not to the shrine of sound.”

— TENNYSON.

Life only teaches love; as love teaches life: deep, personal, intimate knowledge of life in its hidden processes and in its higher manifestations in the heart and soul of humanity, — a knowledge gained either in the school of experience, or by the intuitions and teachings of enlightened minds, which have become ennobled and spiritualized, not darkened and degraded by knowledge; these are the *via media* to an understanding of love's primary laws, and to that holy reverence



for these laws that bows down the soul of man in sweet subservience to love's least obligation; that makes him tender with humility under the least touch of love's hand; that teaches him to obey the helpless pleading of an infant's cry, as a summons to duty more solemn than an imperial mandate of the State; that opens up to his soul in moments when the spell of love is upon him, vistas of life eternal, glimpses of truth more searching than science could ever flash upon the human understanding.

“Not less necessary to the world than the Mother's gift of Love is the twin offering of the Father—Righteousness. . . . For a long time the Family circle—the starting-point and threshold of the true moral life—was, as a circle, incomplete. . . . Scarcely defined at all, broken as soon as formed, the earlier circles allowed their strongest forces to escape almost at the moment they generated. But the walls grew higher and higher with the advance of history. The leakage became less and less. With the Christian era (preservation) was complete; the circle finally closed in, and became a secluded shrine where the culture of everything holy and beautiful was carried on. . . . Feebly, but adequately, in the early chapters of Man's history, it (the Family) fulfilled its function of nursing Love, the Mother of all morality; and Righteousness, the Father of all morality, so preparing a parentage for all beautiful spiritual children which in later years should spring from them. . . . In a far truer sense than Raphael produced his ‘Holy Family,’ Nature has produced a holy family. Not for centuries but for (ages) the family has survived. Time has not tarnished it; no later art has improved upon it; nor genius discovered

anything more lovely. . . . From the bee's cell and the butterfly's wing, men draw what they call the Argument from Design; but it is in *the kingdoms which come without observation* . . . that the purposes of Creation are revealed." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 315.

## XI

### OUR MODERN EDUCATIONAL ERROR

Where there is no knowledge of the soul, there is no good. — Prov. 19: 2.

#### THE SCHOOL

THERE is a modern theory of education which has passed into one of those handy aphorisms that hold the entire philosophy of the theory in a nutshell. This aphorism is, that the way to the mother is through the child. Our whole educational system is founded on the idea that once we can get at the child we have secured the basis on which we can work out the salvation of society. In other words, modern educationalism has a theory, and the factor through which that theory must be worked out is the child.

One of the commonest reproaches against modern educationalism is that it is experimenting with the child. The human instinct in this case, as in most cases, has not erred. It has touched the vital error in our theory of modern education; it has detected under the latter's inordinate zeal to lay hold upon the child only the cold, calculating, non-human interest of the scientific mind, bent upon making a demonstration of its theories even if flesh and nerves agonize under its scalpel, or human feelings shrink from its relentless investigations.

The pursuit of the child as the necessary factor in making a demonstration of this modern educational theory has covered rapidly the immense distances that lie even between the theories of the last generation and the present one in respect to child training; it has overcome almost every material obstacle in the way of equipment and facility for making its demonstration; and, what was a far more obstinate difficulty, it has successfully passed the mountain of prejudice which the traditions of former generations had placed in its way. It has had its experiments actively in operation in the higher grades of education for a generation or more; it passed downward from youth to adolescence, to childhood, applying its tests all the way; and finally it came into its very kingdom when it reached the period of infancy. The revelations made here, almost at its first glance into the field, intoxicated it with the wealth of material for research and experiment which lay before it.

The plan of this scheme of education started with the idea that the way to the mother was through the child; and in this idea the reference is not to the mother *of* the child, but the mother *in* the child — the child as a potential parent. With the cold-blooded indifference of the scientific spirit, the mother of the child represented in this experiment only one of the used-up forces of nature's evolution towards ever higher possibilities. The mother of the child need no longer be reckoned with except as waste material that had served its purpose. If any message be sent from teacher to

mother, if some communication between the two still be desired, the child is used as the medium to the mother; out of the mouths of their babes the mothers learn the wisdom which the teacher hopes may bring to them the lessons of modern enlightenment. But at best not much is hoped for in this direction. That potential parent in the child is worth more in promise of what may come than all the parents of all the children put together.

In this attitude of the modern educationalist towards the child is discovered his essential unfitness as a teacher of that child; and it is a peculiar fact, the significance of which will be more apparent the further we examine into this question, that the most active apostles of these false theories of education are, for the most part, the childless men and women who make up the bulk of the world's great army of school teachers. *The mother is the only legitimate teacher of the young child.* At its very best, the kindergarten is now admitted by the more intelligent among our educators to be but "an artificial makeshift," a poor imitation, in its plan of "mother-play," and its indirect training of the young mind, of the ideal relation that exists by nature between the child and its mother. Its only excuse for being is that this relation in modern life has suffered more than any other from the disorganizing of right domestic conditions, brought about by the peculiar industrial and social revolutions of the time. The school teacher is after all only the usurper of a place in the child's life, which, from the dawn of humanity, has been consecrated to the mother by all the laws of God and nature;

and we are only perpetuating and extending the mistake at the bottom of this wrong arrangement of life's relations when we merely increase the facilities for applying the remedy while we do nothing to prevent the causes that make such a remedy necessary.

Immediately the practical person of to-day will ask, How can this be done? Would you close our kindergartens, disturb our curricula, curtail the efficiency of our splendid educational system by bringing in this incongruous element of mother-teaching; and, with such mothers as the Immigration Bureau passes along to us in motley throngs, to add to our already heavy problem of educating the rising generation, would you attempt to improve upon those excellent methods of training the young with which our normal schools and colleges equip the modern school teacher? Yes, even with such mothers as these, we could work out the problem of educating the child better, and more quickly than we shall ever be able to do with generations of child training in which we have made no place for the mother.

The teacher we need to train for the child is not the raw schoolgirl, full of bloodless theories of the laboratory and class-room, and barren of knowledge regarding the most rudimentary facts of life's experience; we need to train the mothers for this most solemn and momentous duty of awakening the soul in the life of the young child; rather we do not need to train them — nature has already put them through a course of training for this duty that has taught them more wisdom

than could ever be formulated into theories — all we need to do is to create conditions in which it will be possible for the mother to follow her pre-eminent vocation as the child teacher of the race; to bring to her — not to the childless teacher, to whom the terms mother and child are at best but a strange language — every facility for the best performance of her task; to put her within easy reach of every method used in modern educational equipment for developing the infantile intelligence with the least waste of time and the smallest expenditure of effort. Let us do this much and the mother will do the rest; and do it in a way that will realize the most optimistic dreams of the most zealous educationist.

If we cannot persuade the mother to resume — not assume — this task of teacher, which modern educationalism has deprived her of, if we have carried this estrangement of mother and child so far that the teaching faculty in the mother—which is pre-eminently a maternal intuition — has become dulled from disuse, let us resort to any means that will arouse in her the lost sense of her own wonderful potentiality as the supreme teacher of the world, even if we must begin upon the lower levels of her nature and work out our design by building upwards from these to higher reaches of motive and ambition. If the mother's cares, or her poverty, or even her moral deficiencies, prove obstacles to this plan, let us set to work with a will upon these very obstacles, which are not insurmountable, as our one-sided school theorists would

have us believe in their egotistic ambition to prove that they only have the solution of proper child training in their hands, and whose zeal for recognition of the efficiency of their system seems to show a certain anxiety at times lest the re-establishment of this right order of things (a well organized system of child training in the home) would put a serious check upon the abnormal growth of the school's importance in our modern life; an importance which is a subtle menace to that reverence and love for the older institutions of the home and church, which should be developed in the child's nature as fundamental principles of its moral life. If there is any aspect of the question that looks discouraging it is that which shows us the important place the actual, material school building has taken in our midst. There is a concrete demonstration daily made to the mind of the child of to-day, that, though the homes may be neglected and fall to pieces about their ears with poverty, wretchedness, and corruption; and though the churches may struggle on hopelessly for years to gather enough brick and mortar together with which to build a barely decent temple to the Most High, the schools appear as if reared by magic in a night, so swiftly strides the schoolmaster abroad in these days; and before the child's mind and senses all day long there now appears the forceful contrast of the long school hours spent in the relative luxury of these school palaces, where pure air and sweet sunshine and room to live and move and have their being are given to thousands of young lives which



find these things no longer in the homes, where the great tenement population of our great cities are herded, with the sanction of the same legislators who have appropriated millions for expenditure upon the exaggerated improvements of our school system. No wonder that the school teacher has supplanted the mother in the child's life, and that mother-teaching seems to the school theorist only a far-off, forgotten dream no longer possible of realization.

There is no obstacle, however, that should be called insurmountable by any really enlightened mind, to such a plan of education as this; and the furthest seeing minds to-day who are working out the solution of our educational difficulties have already discovered that the source of our greatest failures in education is the elimination of the home and mother influence from the life of the child. There are, moreover, constantly growing intimations that the plan of future education will reverse the present order of things, and give the home again its primary place in the training of the child, with the school as a mere secondary and always a subordinate institution. The more advanced advocates of this change are pointing out the physical and social over and above the merely educational need of training young women in school to a right understanding of the noble mission of motherhood by a well and wisely arranged course of study. A writer on this subject pointedly alludes to some significant causes of the necessity for such training, and the value of it to the education of young women to-day. "There

is an army of girls belonging to the cultivated classes," she says, "who have become accustomed to working at school, and their lives are unhappily aimless at home. There are practically no household affairs to occupy the girl of to-day, the day of apartment houses and ready-made garments. Eventually, she marries, not to increase her opportunities for usefulness, but because she has nothing else to do, and she does not reach her highest excellence in this way." This writer believes that girls of this class should have something definite to do in the period of time that usually passes between graduation and marriage, and recommends that the period of post-graduate study in kindergarten theories, nursing and child study should occupy this time in the young woman's life. These young women would in time form "an educational militia," which would remedy the nothing-to-do-ness of the rich, and aid the poor to a healthier moral and physical standard of living by becoming volunteer assistants among the poor, careworn, and overburdened mothers of the lower classes in directing the latter into the right ways of proper and efficient child training.

In his recent monumental work on the *Psychology of Adolescence*, Professor G. Stanley Hall, that high priest of the new pedagogy, goes farther perhaps than any theorist of this question has yet ventured in advocating special schools for training for motherhood, according to the best and highest conception of that state. This is only one step short of the next advance, which will inevitably come, of training those who are

already mothers to fulfil their mission completely by being teachers of their children also.

It is true things have gone so far in the substitution of the school for the home that the very crudest beginning of such a plan of education seem at present a long way off. We have systematically trained the mothers of this generation away from their duty as child trainers by doing all this duty for them, and they are now either unwilling or unable to assume the smallest portion of this task. But if we can get the mother back by no other means, let us *hire* her as a teacher of the child; and from this lower plane of motive we may hope to re-establish her lost relations to the child by re-forming in her habits of contact and communication and sympathy with child nature which are now either neglected or altogether forgotten. This may seem an impracticable theory from one point of view, and, at first glance, a policy full of disaster to the professional school teacher's interests. But it would be really far simpler to realize such a theory than many of the wild schemes for educational advancement that we hear constantly advocated by certain types of school theorists. If the child's improvement and success became a matter of practical, personal importance to the parent through the latter's co-operation, in part, in the education of the child as a duly recognized teacher, rewarded according to the results obtained in the child — which results could be easily ascertained by the simplest series of tests in the schoolroom — the redevelopment of the teaching faculty in mothers would be so rapid

that, indeed, it might become a real menace to the interests of the professional school teacher; and it might become necessary to cut down to a minimum the salaries of the latter in order to increase resources for mother-teaching. But if this should be the result of such a method, if we should so revolutionize our present theories as to see the advantage of relegating to the school teacher only that portion of work in educating the child which would be contained in the series of practical tests by which the extent of the child's home education could be ascertained, leaving to the parent the larger portion of informal, simple knowledge which the children of former generations learned from their parents as a matter of course before kindergartens and child study were ever thought of, and which the greater number of the mothers of this generation should be able to give far better if the "higher education" of their time has been of any good to them; if, in a word, this is the problem we are confronted with at last, the training and hiring of mothers as teachers of their children, let us subordinate the school teacher to the mother; and at the price of any economy or any sacrifice do not let us stint resources for the mother, nor limit her ability to fulfil her highest mission in the child's life. For the mothers of the poor, helpless to exercise the most rudimentary functions of this duty of child-teacher, even were they morally and mentally capable of it, on account of their daily struggle for even the necessities of physical existence, burdened with not only the care of the child but with the tasks of a

slave in their daily grind of work at home, or even at the shop and factory as the family's wage-earner as well as its mother, for such as these let us build laundries to lighten their wash-tub drudgery; let us provide cook shops which shall make up for the mother's unhappy failure to provide clean and wholesome and strengthening food for her family; let us, if need be, hire servants for her while she, as the child-bearer, serves as a slave. Let us wait upon her hand and foot, and smooth the way before her as she staggers along with her burden of the Child; let us stop short of no service we can offer in helping her carry that burden, except the sacrilege of taking it from her.

## XII

### THE FIRST SCHOOLROOM OF THE RACE

A little child shall lead them. — Isa. 11: 6.

#### MOTHER AND CHILD

THE mistake of modern educationalism in laying hands upon the child, even reaching out to take it as it lies against its mother's breast, is a stride backwards in humanity's development that carries us in retrogression to the very dawn of civilization, before the first, faint awakenings of the instincts of motherhood had passed through the stages of mere femaleness to maternity, and then to that perfected motherhood of a later day and generation which became the supreme ethical factor in the progress and enlightenment of the race.

"When one follows Maternity out of the depths of lower nature, and beholds it ripening in quality as it reaches the human sphere, its character, and the character of the processes by which it is evolved, appear in their full divinity. For of what is Maternity the mother? Of children? No; for these are the mere vehicles of its spiritual manifestation. Of affection between male and female? No; for that, contrary to accepted beliefs, has little to do in the first instance

with sex-relations. Of what, then? Of Love itself, of Love as Love, of Love as Life, of Love as Humanity, of Love as the pure and undefiled fountain of all that is *eternal* in the world.”<sup>1</sup>

Yet the mere state of maternity itself, and even its later development into the higher order of motherhood, would be barren of this transforming element of love if the Divine economy had not provided for its development by creating conditions for motherhood out of which, by sheer necessity as it were, must spring the strong growth of this supreme love-power of the world. “Before altruism — Other-ism, Love — was strong enough to take its own initiative, necessity had to be laid upon all mothers to act in the way required. . . . A mother who did not care for her children would have feeble and sickly children. Their children’s children would be feeble and sickly children. And the day of reckoning would come when they would be driven off the field by a hardier, that is, a better-mothered, race. Hence, the premium of Nature upon better mothers. Hence, *the elimination of all the reproductive failures*, of all the mothers who fell short of completing the process to the last detail. And hence, by the law of the survival of the fittest, Altruism, which at this stage means good-motherism, is forced upon the world.”<sup>2</sup>

Already, with even these meagre data from the pages of natural history, we are making mental analogies between the startling resemblance of civilization’s rudimentary stages to certain decadent conditions in

<sup>1</sup> *Ascent of Man*, p. 259.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 265.

modern society which have revived, by an outrageous frustration of nature's laws, that monstrous impulse of the primeval savage towards the extinction of the Child, which preceded man's moral awakening under the touch of humanity's higher instincts towards good. But, startling as the resemblance appears from even this bare glimpse into civilization's dark beginnings, it does but give a hint of the full extent to which humanity has become perverted from that ideal of the Mother which the most elementary stages of human development foreshadowed as the perfect instrument of God for the salvation of the race. Even the phraseology of the naturalist describes this promise of motherhood in words that thrill with their significance. "Is it too much to say that the one motive of organic Nature was to make Mothers? It is at least certain that this was the chief thing she did. Ask the zoologist what, judging from science alone, Nature aspired to from the first, he could but answer Mammalia—Mothers. In as real a sense as a factory is meant to turn out locomotives or clocks, the machinery of Nature is designed in the last resort to turn out Mothers. . . . It is a fact which no human mother can regard without awe, which no man can realize without a new reverence for woman and a new belief in the higher meaning of Nature, that the goal of the whole plant and animal kingdoms seems to have been the creation of a family, which the very naturalist has had to call Mammalia.<sup>1</sup>"

But, as natural science points out, the mere state of

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 268.



maternity or motherhood is to be valued more for its mission to the world as a moral force than as the merely physical agency for the perpetuation of the race. "With the creation of human children, Altruism found an area for its own expansion such as had never before existed in the world. In this new soil it grew from more to more, and reached a potentiality which enabled it to burst the trammels of physical conditions, and overflow the world as a moral force."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the uses of motherhood as a moral force have, as we see by this evidence from the pages of natural history, been made dependent upon the proper discharge of its physical functions by a necessity of natural law so strong and unavoidable that there is but one escape for the mother from her vocation as the world's great missionary, and this is the loss of her child. To resort again to the text of the physiologist's teaching on this point: "Every Mammalian child born into the world must come to be fed, must, for a given number of hours each day, be in the maternal school, and whether it like it or not, learn its lessons. No young of any Mammal can nourish itself. There is that in it, therefore, at this stage which compels it to seek its mother; and there is that in the mother which compels her, even physically, to seek her child. On the physiological side, the name of this impelling power is lactation; on the ethical side, it is love. And there is no escape henceforth from communion between mother and child, or only one — death. . . . The training of humanity is seen to be

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 264.

under a compulsory education act.”<sup>1</sup> But this education act, we may add, first issued by Nature as her own supreme mandate upon the care and training of the child, has been vetoed so effectually by the modern educationalist that the mother’s real mission in the world is threatened with extinction, or at least it has, for the majority of mothers, reverted to that mere physical function of maternity which belongs only to the lower grades of nature, where the mother’s relation to her offspring ceases almost at birth.

There is a common notion that only among lower grades of human life are found mothers who bear resemblance to this kind of “brute maternity”; but as a matter of fact the conditions of motherhood among the poor — bad enough as they are most often found to be — are far higher up in the ethical scale than the maternal customs now so commonly practised among the mothers of the wealthy, where the relations between mother and child have been pushed to the furthest limit of estrangement. The dictates of modern scientific child-training recommend that the child should not even be caressed by the mother; and so unaccustomed is the new “science baby” to the fondling of maternal arms that it cries not for the want of such caressing, like the babies of former days, but at the touch of any hands except perhaps those of the strange nurse who is too expert at her profession to disturb it with unnecessary handling. The children brought up under such training are doubtless gaining physically,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 278.

but the gain is wholly and altogether upon the physical side at a tremendous cost to the moral nature of the child. At best, it develops into nothing higher than a healthy young animal with the fullest equipment of animal appetites and instincts which its human capacity is capable of carrying. This type of child has become common enough for us to recognize its resemblance to purely animal nature in the lower stages of being; and, indeed, to be reminded again by it of those conditions of maternity and infancy which exist only in stages of organic life below the animal kingdom.

"All elementary animals are orphans; they know neither home nor care; the earth is their only mother or the inhospitable sea; they waken to isolation, to apathy, to the attentions only of those who seek their doom. But as we draw nearer the apex of the animal kingdom the spectacle of a protective Maternity looms into view. . . . The truth is, Nature so made animals in the early days that they did not need mothers. The moment they were born they looked after themselves. Mothers in these days would have been a superfluity. All that Nature worked at at that dawning date was maternity in a physical sense — Motherhood came as a later and a rarer growth. The children of those days were not really children at all; they were only offspring, springers off, deserters from home. At one bound they were out into life on their own account, and she who begat them knew them no more. That early world therefore . . . was a bleak and loveless world. It was a world without children, and a world

without mothers. It is good to realize how heartless Nature was till these arrived.”<sup>1</sup>

The importance of the ethical element in the relations of mother and child is again and again brought forward by modern scientists and philosophers in their researches in the field of natural history. John Fiske dwells upon the prolongation of helpless infancy as a chief factor in the elevation of humanity, and says, “In order to bring about that wonderful event, natural selection had to call in the aid of other agencies, and the chief of these agencies was the gradual lengthening of babyhood.”<sup>2</sup> “But the fact is,” says another, “the progress of culture has shortened the period of babyhood,” to the gain, perhaps, of the child’s mental development, but plainly to the moral detriment of both mother and child; and at the inevitable risk of breaking down those hereditary habits of maternity upon which were built up the very foundations of human society. “All social fabrics of the world are built around woman. The first stable society was a mother and her helpless infant, and this little group is the grandest phenomenon still. To attach the man permanently to this group for the good of the kind has been the struggle of the ages. No wonder that the mother goddess exists in all theologies, that savages worship the all-producing earth as a mother, that maternity has been accorded the highest place (in the human order) in prayer and adoration.”<sup>3</sup> “It is here

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> *Cosmic Philosophy*, Vol. 2, Chaps. 12, 16, 21.

<sup>3</sup> *Woman’s Share in Primitive Culture*. Mason; p. 818.

and there affirmed that women are tiring of maternity, and that the progress of civilization and intellectuality are opposed to childbearing. When such sentiment becomes prevalent in any tribe or region or state or nation, its doom is already in progress.”<sup>1</sup>

Yet though this separation of mother and child has advanced step by step with the march of education, it is not because Mind and Motherhood are incompatible conditions. Intelligence, indeed, is the highest qualification for motherhood, for, as we have seen, it is only when the development of the mother begins to rise out of the lower phases of mere brute instinct and follow the more enlightened dictates of the mind and will that motherhood assumes those characteristics which place its moral worth even far above the value of its physical service to human life.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 284.

“The madonna conception expresses man’s highest conception of woman’s nature. . . . The elimination of maternity is one of the great calamities, if not diseases, of our age. Marholm (*Psychology of Woman*) points out at length how art again to-day (depicts) woman with no child in her arms or even in sight; a mere figureine, calculated perhaps to entice, but not to bear; incidentally degrading the artist who depicts her to a fashion-plate painter, perhaps with suggestions of the arts of the toilet, cosmetics, coquetry, etc. . . . As in the Munchausen tale, the wolf slowly ate the running nag from behind until he found himself in the harness, so in the disoriented woman, the mistress, virtuous and otherwise, is slowly supplanting the mother. . . . Indeed, in some psychic respects, it seems as if in human society the processes of subordinating the male to the female, carried so far in some of the animal species, had already begun. If he (man) is not worshipped as formerly, it is because he is less worshipful or more effeminate, less vigorous and less able to excite and retain the great love of true, not to say great, women.” — *The Psychology of Adolescence*. Professor G. Stanley Hall; Vol. II., pp. 627, 628.

"Till the brain arrived, everything was too brief, too rapid for ethical achievements; animals were in a hurry to be born, children thirsted to be free. There was no helplessness to pity, no pain to relieve, no quiet hours, no watching; to the mother, no moment of suspense — the most educative moment of all — when the spark of life in her little one burned low. Parents could be of no use to their offspring physically, and the offspring could be of no use to their parents *psychically*. The young required no infancy; the old acquired no sympathy. Even among the other mammalia or the birds the mother's chance was small. There, infancy extends to a few days or weeks, yet is but an incident in a life preoccupied with sterner tasks. A lioness will bleed for her cub to-day, and in to-morrow's struggle for life contend with it to the death. A sheep knows its lamb only while it is a lamb. The affection in these cases, fierce enough while it lasts, is soon forgotten." <sup>1</sup>

Let us not lay it altogether at the door of the mother, however, if her development as a moral force in the upward progress of the race has been checked in these latter days. About the time the schoolmaster went abroad in the pioneer days of our country's march towards progress, the mother went abroad too. The schoolmaster relieved her of the necessity of staying at home, since her occupation at home — as teacher of the child — was gone. Since that march of the schoolmaster began, the retrogression of the mother set in. From the isolation of the mother from her child, the decadence of the mother-instinct, which has paced step

<sup>1</sup> *Ascent of Man*, p. 287.

by step with modern educationalism, took its rise.<sup>1</sup> It was at this point that the first stone was taken from the foundations of that school of maternal training which nature built up for the child with such infinite care when her great Education Act was first enacted in the heart of humanity's first mother. "The creation of Mammalia established two schools in the world — the two oldest and surest and best equipped schools of ethics that have ever been in it — the one for the child, who must now at least know its mother, the other for the mother, who must as certainly attend to her child. The only thing that remains now is to secure that they shall both be kept in that school as *long as it is possible to detain them*. The next effort . . . is to lengthen out these school days, *and give*

<sup>1</sup> "In a significant paper, by Dr. Allen (*New England Magazine*, 1882), on the New England Family, which was the germ of American civilization, and where for two hundred years the homes were well-nigh models, it is shown how the birth-rate has steadily declined for half a century and that at a very rapid rate, until it is lower than that of any European nation, France itself not excepted. In 1875, there were 359,000 families in Massachusetts; of these, 23,739 consisted of only one person, 115,456 of only two, and 140,974 of only three persons. Dr. Allen estimated that only one half of the New England mothers could properly nurse their offspring, and that the number who could do so was constantly decreasing. While failure to do so might be often due to lack of wish, it was usually due to undeveloped mammary glands, feeble digestion, and nervousness. This state of things, he assures us, can be found to anything like the same extent nowhere else and among no other nation or race in history. Foreign families, especially, if they acquire property, approach this condition a few years after they land on our shores. The Jews and our grandmothers thought barrenness a curse, but now the bearing and rearing of large families is felt to belong to low life. Love of offspring is less intense; woman's organization is changing under new conditions. — *The Psychology of Adolescence*. G. Stanley Hall; p. 595.



*affection time to grow."* For the sake of throwing these significant facts from natural history into still greater relief against the present conditions of maternity in the world, let us lengthen out the quotation on this subject. "No animal except man was permitted to have his education thus prolonged. Many creatures were allowed to stay at school for a few days or weeks, but to one only was given a curriculum prolonged enough to accomplish its exalted end. Watch two of the highest organisms during their earliest youth, and observe the striking contrast in the time they are made to remain at their mother's side. The first is a human infant; the second, born, let us suppose, on the same day, is a baby monkey. In a few days or weeks the baby monkey is almost able to leave its mother. Already it can climb, and eat, and chatter like its parents; and in a few weeks more the creature is as independent of them as the winged-seed is of the parent tree. Meantime, and for many months to come, its little twin is unable to feed itself, or clothe itself, or protect itself; it is a mere semi-unconscious chattel, a sprawling ball of helplessness, the world's one type of impotence. The body is there in all its parts, bone for bone and muscle for muscle, like the other. But somehow this body will not do its work. Something as yet hangs fire. The body has eyes, but they see not, ears, but they hear not, limbs, but they walk not. This body is a failure. Why does the human infant lie like a log on the forest-bed while its nimble prototype mocks it from the bough above? Why did that which is not



human step out into life so long before that which is? . . . We know what this delay means ethically — it was necessary *for moral training that the human child should have the longest possible time by its mother's side.*"<sup>1</sup>

"With the physical drama carried out to the last detail, the ethical drama opened. An early result, partly of her sex, and partly of her passive strain, is the founding through the instrumentality of the first savage mother of a new and beautiful social state — Domesticity. While man, restless, eager, hungry, is a wanderer on the earth, woman makes a Home. And though this home be but a platform of sticks and leaves, it becomes the first great school-room of the human race. For one day there appears in this roofless room that which shall teach the teachers of the world — a Little Child."<sup>2</sup>

Contrast this idyl of primitive bliss with a picture of domestic conditions in our own enlightened age. At home to-day in the solitary house sits the mother, her hands hanging idle, her bosom cold; in her heart, nay, in her whole physical being, a hunger for something that is missed. If she is intelligent, if science has taught her the needs of her being, she knows what that hunger means. If she is a low creature of mere brute instincts, she does not seek the cause of her craving, but only the gratification of it, or the forgetfulness of it in whatever form of dissipation lies nearest to her resources or conforms best with

<sup>1</sup> *Ascent of Man*, pp. 282, 283.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 281.

her tastes. The old dissipations of gossip and dress and trivialities fail to satisfy the hunger of a nature in which the laws of life and love have been thwarted and perverted like this. Something stronger is craved for; and every day's report of the world and its ways brings us further evidence of woman's dissatisfaction with the happiness to be found in honourable wifehood, motherhood, and home, and the direful results of this dissatisfaction in modern society.

The homes have driven the children out, and there is nothing now to do but for the schools to take them in. Like orphans the little ones flock to these refuges — in the winter to keep warm, and in the summer to keep cool. Troops of them come to the beneficent refuge of the school when the hot pavements of the city streets, and the fetid air of the tenements drive them helplessly forth to better shelter in the great cool spaces of the school building. The babies come too, even those who have not yet reached the age prescribed in the kindergarten rules. Now and then, by a pathetic lie, the "little mothers" try to palm off the two and three year old baby brother and sister on the overburdened teacher, or get it in on the plea that there is no one at home to take care of it, as the mother is out at work. With a benevolence that in a sense has come to be a curse, the great school system makes provision for not only the mental needs of the homeless child, but tries to meet its physical needs also, in order to lay some kind of a basis in its starved life for the better training of its mind. Only recently it was seriously

proposed to the supervisors of some of our great city public schools that the children of the poor should be fed by the school, since it was discovered that great numbers of them were sent from home daily in a half-starved condition. Truly, the limit of the home's displacement by the school is reached at last if the child must turn from its home to the school for even its bodily nourishment. The most primary conditions for securing the child's attachment to home and parents are based upon the *feeding* function. The strongest influence of the mother is associated with her ability to feed her children properly. The family table is the most permanent material bond of family union, and even of affection. A mother who has been mistress of the art of cooking, who has had watchful and intelligent personal care of the food of the family, has a hold over the affections of both husband and children that she may count on retaining to the very end. This may seem an unworthy estimate of the quality of maternal influence, but it is nothing more than an estimate of the relations which the physical life has to the moral, or even to the spiritual life of human nature. A mother's slovenly, unintelligent, and unhealthful manner of feeding her family can be a more fruitful source of their estrangement from her, and even of ultimate family disruption, than any direct moral cause may be. A mother might be a saint as to moral or spiritual qualities, but she would be probably an utter failure as a mother if she were a bad cook, or an inefficient purveyor of food to her family. The mother's

function of feeding her children is associated with the holiest as well as the sweetest relations of the woman to the human race. Peculiarly significant was that fine old Saxon meaning of "lady," — the loaf-giver. The modern fashion of dispensing with as many household duties as possible, of hiring menials to perform every kind of personal service, of even giving up home life altogether and living in hotels, has done more to chill the springs of human affection than any other agency. It is in the heart of the mother as mistress and dispenser of gifts and of loving service to her family that these affections are enthroned. In abrogating her privileges in this respect she has paid a heavy penalty in the loss of the strongest bond of influence over human nature that a woman can possess.

### XIII

## PRIMARY PRINCIPLES AND SECONDARY MOTIVES IN EDUCATION

Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, and the rod of correction shall drive it away. — Prov. 22: 18.

### TEACHER AND CHILD

THROUGHOUT the preceding arguments which have urged the necessity of the mother as a child teacher, and her superiority for this rôle over all other teachers ever made by books, a vital objection has doubtless been urging its claim in the reader's mind; and in the mind of the writer its presence there has been felt instinctively and its protest anticipated. This objection is a purely practical one, and for this reason most formidable. Put negatively it might be expressed in the indignant accusation that the consistent following out of such a programme of mother teaching as is here advocated would result in producing only a generation of illiterates; that the splendid progress we have made in educational achievements would be hopelessly checked; that our schoolhouses would become encumbrances upon the earth, cobwebs would hang upon the class-room walls where the teacher would sit solitary with all her occupation gone, and that an age of

ignorance would supersede our brilliant period of twentieth-century culture and intelligence.

This picture will perhaps delineate fully the desperate state of things depicted by the imagination of those to whom the idea of mother teaching is based only upon conditions as they exist at present in the home — as a result, largely, of the mistake of modern education in separating the child from its mother — and not upon conditions as they may be when an enlightened educational system recognizes and employs the incalculably valuable agencies of home and parent as primary factors in education. Imagination has, indeed, misled us into more than one false conclusion in our overwrought theories about education. It has played a mischievous part in building up the notion that the profession of school teaching is profoundly concerned with sentiment; sentiment first of all in reference to the school teacher, who must feel herself or himself moved by a sort of divine impulse to the election of this noble calling; and whom we would invest primarily with a character of highly developed ethical qualities and, secondarily only, with an equipment of technical knowledge and training in the methods of school teaching; and besides this a sentiment in reference to the teacher's relationship to the child that is of almost mystical significance. The ideal of this relationship is imagined to be something between the mother's fostering solicitude and the guardian angel's admonitory protectiveness. True, this does not describe the ordinary public school teacher's estimate of

her mission or others' estimate of it generally. It is too commonly admitted among this class of teachers that the motive for teaching is the strictly practical one of earning an honest living; and this frank admission is no more to their discredit than the same motive is in the case of any other labourer in the field of business or professional life. In fact, those who admit such a motive and who regard their occupation as teachers with a strict estimation of the importance of doing an honest day's work and of getting results as near as possible to the always over-exacting standards of school supervisors, are found more generally to be classified by the latter as successful and efficient teachers; while the sentimental or theoretical pedagogue lags far behind with a burden of mixed motives and encumbering fancies that get sadly in the way of the downright, practical labour that is called for in the ordinary classroom.

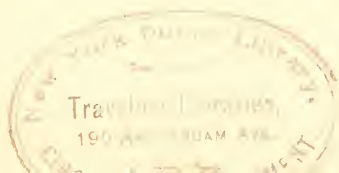
As a matter of fact, while we may not minimize the moral obligation of the school teacher, as well as every other human being, to aim primarily at the highest development of those ethical qualities which are the foundation of all character and conduct, either in private or public life, the qualification which has the most actual reference to the profession of school teaching as it is organized to-day is an equipment of *technical knowledge*, besides an efficient training in the best method of imparting that knowledge to the child. The word profession is used here only out of concession to the common application of this word to the work of

teaching. The right word in the right place here is the *business* of school teaching. As much as any other worker the teacher who performs her task in the most business-like spirit, with all the strict and inflexible principles which right and honest business exacts — and the disciplinary value of which is inestimable in the training of character — is the one who gets the best results. In a word, the more she eliminates mere sentiment from the class-room, the smoother will run the routine of its work; and the more swiftly will the educational system produce the trained intellect and the disciplined will directing the right performance of the tasks that are set before hand and brain to do. While, on the other hand, the teacher with “feelings,” the one who has been handicapped for the performance of this work by an emotional nature, which begins almost invariably by “breaking down” the first time she is turned into a class-room of insurgent youngsters, and which, if she survives this ordeal, continues to hamper her efficiency throughout her whole career as teacher by getting between her and the rebelliousness of untrained wills, is the traditional failure of the class-room. Common sense in vain admonishes such a one to put “feelings” under foot and use the one agency which insubordinate human nature, either in child or man, must be met with when it breaks from the bounds of authority, and this is law; not the “law of love,” though love may be there as a merciful moderator of its harsh terms; but the law of will and of that superior force which represents authority’s power to enforce



the law. Such a teacher as above described is, however, in most cases, but a wretched medium through which to impart to the child those elementary lessons in the law of authority which are as essential to the upbuilding of its character as the profounder lessons of the law of love which were inculcated first, best, and, would we might say, always by the mother.

It is often the teacher who loves teaching for its own sake, who feels drawn to it as a "vocation," rather than an avocation, and whose maternal yearning toward the child would make her task a work of love rather than of labour, who is most likely to prove a failure in the actual work and results of ordinary school teaching. And yet, poor teacher, it may be from no fault either of her training or her nature, but rather the eloquent evidence of her calling to a life, not in the school of law, but in the school of love. The only child teaching which can be dignified properly with the word vocation is the mother's; and this conception of teaching as a "vocation" is an unconscious yearning of the maternal instinct in woman that strives to realize the maternal relation toward the child in an idealized or supernaturalized form. The effort to so realize it usually meets with defeat and disillusionment when the actual business of school teaching is undertaken by natures like this under the ordinary conditions of school life; though there may be ideal conditions under which it is sometimes, in part, realized. But, generally speaking, it is found that the best school teacher is the one who is only a teacher — qualified for her work according to



the prevailing standards of school boards — not a mixture of mother-impulses and pedagogical methods. School teaching to the child is, after all, a sort of business training for life in the world. The class-room with its associations and contests anticipates in a large measure for the child the experiences of its later life in its relation with others. In this little arena of childish struggle are foregathered the elements of those moral forces with which its maturer life in the world shall be confronted and which it must then meet in a conflict that may be to the death.

As love should be the strongest impelling force of the home, justice should be the dominating keynote of the class-room; administered by the teacher with a fineness of moral perception and an integrity of conscience that leave no loophole through which the searching intuitiveness of the child's mind may discover in the teacher a moral deficiency or an unworthy motive. Perhaps the whole difference between the mother's and the teacher's relation to the child may be described here by pointing out that, while the teacher is an almost autocratic dictator and judge in the child's life, there is never an instant when she is not on trial before the secret tribunal of the childish judgment; and perhaps never an occasion when her opinion is accepted as "ex-cathedra"; while from the mother's opinion there is no appeal, and there is no conceivable standard by which her moral worth would be measured by the child, to whom she represents a finality.

There is so much said to-day about what the teacher

is to the child; so much that is only the outcome of many of the psychological vapourings and vagaries with which modern educationalism is clouded; so much that is altogether contradictory to our own personal, practical knowledge of the facts in the case, that it is well to reiterate the claims of the mother which have been constructively denied by these false theories. This close, inward knowledge, gleaned from the ineffaceable records of the child's experience in our individual lives, tells us more of what the teacher is to the child than any psychological lore can reveal. The child — as we knew the child in our own lives — looks out at the teacher as at a strange being, forever outside its hidden, inward life; with scarcely any point of vital contact with that little world of strange desires and furtive outreachings for forbidden things about which the soul of the child revolves in an ever-widening orbit as the body grows and the mind expands. Except in an odd case here and there where the child and the woman — or mother-soul — in the teacher meet in sympathy, the whole relation is at its best an artificial one; it is an expedient pressed upon us by the exigencies of life as it must be met and lived to-day. There is but one ruler over this hidden child-world whose reign is "by right divine," and whose power is omnipotent to the child-mind. It matters little what daily invasions are made into the child's inner life through its relations with the external world, while the reign of the mother in that hidden kingdom remains undisputed. The teacher plays her little part in the daily unfolding of

the young mind; she promulgates her dicta and exacts at least external acceptance of the knowledge she imparts. She has, too, her formal rules and tests by which to gauge the child's mental receptivity to this knowledge. But who can formulate into words the subtle language of look and touch and tone by which the influences and communications of the mother are imparted to her child? And is there any gauge by which the strength and endurance of these influences and communications may be taken?

Yet any day we may hear statements made by educational theorists that utterly contradict both their own and everyone else's experience of the nature and extent of the mother's influence in contrast to that of the teacher. "The teacher is the most potent influence in our life," is the statement that was made lately before an audience of intelligent people by one of our foremost educators; "the school is the most important social institution in human life — secondary to none, home, church, or any other," was the amazing assertion made by the director of a prominent normal school during one of the recent annual conventions of the National Education Association. And the audience which listened to this speaker, though it contained some of the most active and aggressive workers for enlightened advancement in education, accepted this statement without moving a muscle, although not a few among them were afterwards on their feet in warm dispute over technical differences of opinion as to certain modes and methods of formal instruction. Yet

these statements have become so common that the sense of them does not penetrate beyond the surface of the ordinary understanding. They are the cant phrases of modern educationalism; and are taken for granted as true, coming as they do from what are regarded as sources of authority in educational theory. But what authority goes back of the strong convictions that are rooted in the personal experience of our individual lives, and the testimony of this experience as to the place occupied in our lives by teacher, mother, kindred, home, school, and religion? Barren and broken indeed is the human life in which the order of these relations becomes perverted to the extent of displacing mother by teacher, home by school, religion by society and business.

While the teacher has been usurping the mother's place in the child's life, under the dictation and sanction of modern educationalism, the encroachment of the mother upon the exclusive field of the teacher is by no means advocated in this theory of mother teaching. Instead of the latter curtailing the efficiency of the development of the teacher's field of work, it will enlarge its boundaries beyond the narrow limits of the classroom walls; and will bring into the teacher's life, not so much as teacher, but as man or woman, the sanctity of a mission next only to the mother's in its importance and in its possibilities for good. This mission will lie outside the narrow sphere of the school, and will be in line with the work of the teachers only by an indirect route; yet, though indirect, it will lead more quickly to

the results aimed at by them than if they paced a lifetime alone in the treadmill of the schoolroom's thankless tasks. The realization of this mission will require no extraordinary or superhuman effort in the teacher; indeed, it will be a labour-saving scheme more than anything else; and will be based upon the fundamental principle of all schemes for saving the waste of individual effort — co-operation; co-operation with the mother. The teacher will best understand the child and its needs by being familiar with all the other elements and factors that enter into and influence its life outside the school, and by establishing personal and sympathetic relations between the home and the school. The school within prescribed limits and at special hours will be as much of a resort for the parent as for the child; and here parents will meet to become familiar in turn with those things that enter into the child's life from its relations outside the home; and to form among themselves strong, co-operative associations which shall have a voice in those vital matters of educational policy, — the selection of proper text-books, the appointment of fit teachers, the right proportion of hours to be spent in the class-room, school hygiene, and many other matters of the most imperative interest to the parent, which, under the present system, are controlled arbitrarily by close and often narrow-minded school committees without the slightest reference to the primary right of the parent as a judge of the best conditions for the child's welfare.

As things are now, how does the actual relation

between teacher and mother stand? From the constitution of our educational plan, and the practice of modern mothers to get rid of their children as quickly and as completely as the teacher will consent to take them, there has grown up a relation between these two factors in the child's life which can be described in no other terms than natural enmity. This is prompted only by the common instinct of human nature that protests against the carrying of any burden but one's own. The mother tries to shift the child on to the teacher, and the latter in turn tries to shirk a burden which natural instinct tells her properly belongs to the mother. And between the two the poor little burden gets some hard knocks and bruises, and perhaps some scars in its young life that may permanently mar the relation of mutual trust and confidence that should exist between child and teacher. Nothing can so damage and even destroy altogether the child's goodwill toward its superiors, and sow the seeds of insubordination to all law, than this tacit enmity between parent and teacher. It is, of course, a relation that exists mostly among the parents of the lower classes only, who are apt to feel more keenly and secretly resent the superiority of the teacher's intelligence and who often seek to discredit the value of the latter's opinion, when it is quoted by the child, because they instinctively fear that intelligence in the child which may in time arm itself against them and create that chasm of estrangement which so commonly exists between the illiterate parent and the school-bred child.



It is this estrangement, with the secret shame and contempt for the illiterate parent which is fostered so widely by these exaggerated notions of the importance of the school in the child's life, that too often disrupts the homes of the poor and brings the abandoned parent to a desolate old age in poverty, or in the public institutions of charity.

But it is necessary to consider here more specifically the reasons why teaching the child during the pre-adolescent period is so largely a matter of routine; and why mechanical and even stereotyped methods of imparting knowledge to the young mind at this age are really superior, and, according to biological laws as well as psychological principles, are really the correct methods of getting the result aimed at: the acquisition by the child of a certain amount of definitive, technical knowledge. The child at this age must — not so much by an imperative of natural or spiritual law, but rather perhaps in a measure by a violation of these laws, which would order for it an altogether different method of learning to know life — acquire a portion of *technical knowledge*, well and accurately learned, as a prerequisite for its efficiency in meeting the exigencies of modern conditions of living, which make a very different demand upon the resources of the individual than did the conditions of the past. “The manifold knowledges and skills of our highly complex civilization,” as the author of the *Psychology of Adolescence* points out, enforce the rapid and almost premature development of the human intelligence in childhood, along *strictly*



*formal lines*, to an extent that, from the point of view of the philosophic mind, seems nothing less than deplorable, even while its absolute necessity is admitted.

“We should transplant the human sapling, I concede reluctantly, as early as eight, but not before, to the schoolhouse, with its imperfect lighting, ventilation, temperature. We must shut out nature and open books. The child must sit on unhygienic benches and work the tiny muscles that wag the tongue and pen, and let all the others, which constitute nearly half its weight, decay. Even if it be prematurely, he must be subjected to special disciplines and be apprenticed to the higher qualities of adulthood, for he is not only a product of nature, but a candidate for a highly developed humanity. To many, if not to most, of the influences here there can be at first but little inner response. . . . The wisest requirements seem to the child more or less alien, arbitrary, artificial, falsetto. There is much passivity, often active resistance and evasions, and perhaps spasms of obstinacy to it all. But the senses are keen and alert, reactions are immediate and vigorous, the memory is quick, sure, and lasting, and ideas of space, time, and physical causation, and of many a moral and social licit and non-licit, are rapidly unfolding. Never again will there be such susceptibility to drill and discipline, such plasticity to habituation, or such ready adjustment to new conditions. It is the age of external and mechanical training. Reading, writing, drawing, manual training, musical technic, foreign languages and their pronunciation, the manipulation of numbers and of geometrical elements, and many kinds of skill have now their golden hour, and if it passes unimproved all these can never be acquired later without a heavy handicap of

disadvantage and loss. These necessities may be hard for the health of body, sense, mind, as well as for morals, and pedagogic art consists in breaking the child into them betimes as intensively and as quickly as possible with minimal strain and with the least amount of explanation or coquetting for natural interest and in calling medicine confectionery. This is not teaching in its true sense so much as it is drill, inculcation, and regimentation. The method should be mechanical, repetitive, authoritative, dogmatic. The automatic powers are now at their very apex, and they can do and bear more than our degenerate pedagogy knows or dreams of. Here we have something to learn from the schoolmasters of the past, back to the Middle Ages, and even from the ancients. The greatest stress, *with short periods and few hours*, incessant insistence, incitement, and little reliance upon interest, reason, or work done without the presence of the teacher, should be the guiding principles in these *essentially formal* and, to the child, contentless elements of knowledge."<sup>1</sup>

The words of this author which we have taken the liberty to emphasize by italics afford the text for a consideration of one of the most vexed questions of the hour in the educational world. This is the value of *informal* education — represented by kindergarten methods, nature study, physical exercises, manual training courses, etc. — which has been introduced under the new regime; and the necessity of *formal* instruction or mental drill only, which is urged by the older method. In an editorial summary of the educa-

<sup>1</sup> *The Psychology of Adolescence*. By Professor G. Stanley Hall. Preface, p. 12.

tional progress of the year, published recently in a widely read magazine, the following statement was made: "One of the most important educational events of the past year is the challenging of the new education and the response to that challenge which has been so promptly and effectively made. It may be taken for granted now that the new education has come to stay, and that the so-called 'fads and frills' are hereafter to be accepted as fundamental subjects of training side by side with the three R's." This opinion represents very well the attitude of those who favour and enforce the so-called "fads and frills" now introduced into our school system; while the quotation from the letter of a parent published with many others in the columns of one of our daily newspapers last winter, when the dispute over this question was at fever heat, is sufficiently typical of the attitude of the ordinary parent toward the results of the present system in the actual education of the child. "The present school administration seems to have no conception of the needs of the children in their hands. Their time is too precious in this life to be wasting it teaching them how to make toy baskets and paper fol de rols. What help will the knowledge of how to mix colors, sewing raffia work, or music be to a boy who will perhaps have to begin life in a butcher shop or grocery store? Better that they should know how to add two and two together and how to write than have methods to prevent choking, poisoning, and how to cure burns beaten into their heads. Parents are not sending their children to school in these

days for such things. They cannot afford to do it. I mean the parents of the masses of the people. They cannot afford to do it any more than their fathers or mothers could. I have a boy of twelve years old, attending school, here in this city, and it seems to me he is being taught everything but what will be of practical use to him. He can draw, sew, weave, make watch chains out of shoe laces, but he cannot do a simple sum nor write ten words properly. As for spelling and grammar, they seem to be unknown quantities. Now what is to become of a boy like that when he has to go out in the world to make his living? No wonder there has to be a Children's Court or that it is packed daily with youthful offenders." Another complains that "Children in the advanced classes have no time for play. While school is in session, recitations in a dozen lessons occupy all their time, except perhaps a few minutes given over to study. After school hours they need all the time for the preparation of the next day's work;" and this critic pertinently asks, "What is the need of teaching, sewing, or cooking in school hours to girls who should have time enough left them to serve useful apprenticeships in these things in their own homes?" To this critic it likewise seems "consummate foolishness to instruct an eleven-year-old girl in the distinguishing symptoms of diphtheria, typhoid fever, and tuberculosis. Such study excites a needless fear of a vaguely conceived evil the children call 'germs,' which may mean anything from a speck in the bread to a lady-bug on a lettuce leaf."

That technical instruction in physical science is carried to an absurd and painful length throughout the entire school curriculum may be evidenced here by copying from an examination paper which the writer found in the hands of a frail, fourteen-year-old girl who was aspiring to pass the "Regents' Examinations of the State of New York."

"University of the State of New York. 185 High School Examination.

### PHYSIOLOGY AND HYGIENE

Wednesday, March 29th, 1905. Time, 1.15 to 5.15 P.M.

1 Define five of the following: auricle, ptyalin, anesthetic, pleura, nucleus, scapula, trachea.

2. Describe the structure and mention the function of tendons.

3. Name (*a*) an involuntary muscle (*b*) a voluntary muscle. How do voluntary and involuntary muscles differ in action?

4. Mention two common food substances rich in (*a*) albumen, (*b*) starch, (*c*) fats. What is the function of water in digestion?

5. State in detail the effects of strong alcoholic drink on digestion.

6. Mention two ferments of the pancreatic juice, and state their specific functions.

7. Mention the function of the lacteals.

8. Describe the red blood corpuscles as to (*a*) structure, (*b*) function.

9. Describe the function of breathing, showing how the air is caused to enter the lungs and how it is expelled.

10. Explain the effects of strong alcoholic drink on the temperature of the body.

11. Describe the structure and state the functions of the medulla oblongata.

12. Describe the structure of the middle ear.

13. What is meant by long-sightedness? Make a diagram indicating the form of the eye in long-sightedness.

14. Mention (a) two diseases often contracted by drinking impure water, (b) two methods of purifying water.

15. Suggest an experiment to demonstrate the presence of carbonic acid gas (carbon dioxid) in expired breath."<sup>1</sup>

The truth is the present system has been designed largely with the idea of meeting the conditions of child life that exist among our great immigrant population, rather than to suit the requirements of intelligent parents who take personal care of their children's physical well-being, and are fully capable of doing so. It is assumed that the parents of the former class are almost totally worthless as protectors or providers of the child's physical welfare; and so the school tries to take over the entire care and training of their children. It

<sup>1</sup>"I feel compelled to resent the efforts of those educators who would undertake the training of the work of life with the study of physical science alone. There may be minds that can be immediately awakened to life by physical science, for in the infinite variety of man almost any peculiarity can be found; but no observant teacher can feel it safe to begin the intellectual life of the child with things so remote from the old channels of the human mind. Man has had the world opened to him by the gateway of his sympathies, and by that portal alone he should always be led on his way into life." — *The Interpretation of Nature*. Professor Shaler; p. 277.

is of course a great mistake to fix the standards of public education from such a point of view as this, and the intelligent and capable parents who form the major portion of the community have just cause for criticism and resentment against these standards.

But to return to our text and its further application to this question. When modern psychology rediscovered the child, a reaction set in against ancient methods of school teaching that culminated finally in little short of a mania. And no wonder that educators were carried beyond bounds in advocating newer and better methods of training the young when psychology revealed to them the condition of thralldom under which the child of the past too often suffered in all its mental and physical faculties by a mistaken repression of some of the best uses of these faculties. The aim of the older method was discipline; the ideal of the new theory is freedom. Most of us are familiar with the methods used by the former to reach the desired end; and it would be perhaps hard to find any amongst us who would be willing to go again through the machinery of those methods ourselves, though many of us are still advocating and forcing them upon the present generation. A simple study of muscles alone, and their meaning to the modern educator, might convert many an opponent of the newer system into a radical reformer of the older method; and a little patient explanation to parents and public of biological laws and necessities by those who advocate and enforce the new system upon the schools would be far more becoming on the



part of these reformers than the haughty attitude of the autocrat which is now assumed by some of them.

Modern psychology not only believes that "muscles are in a most intimate and peculiar sense the organs of the will," but that "they may be called the organs of thought and feeling as well as of will," and that "their culture is *brain building*." It believes that "for the young motor education is cardinal," because "muscles are the vehicles of habituation, imitation, obedience, character, and even of manners and customs"; that "they have built all the roads, cities, and machinery in the world, written all the books, spoken all the words, and, in fact, have done everything that man has accomplished with matter"; that "habits even determine the deeper strata of belief, thought is repressed action, and deeds, not words, are the language of complete men." It builds its theory of the necessity for motor education of the young upon a discovery by scientific tests of the muscular potency in the child, and the part it plays in the child's physical, mental, and moral development. "The number of movements, the frequency with which they are repeated, their diversity, the number of combinations . . . whether we consider the movements of the body as a whole, fundamental movements of the large limbs, or finer accessory motions, is amazing. Nearly every external stimulus is answered by a motor response. Dressler (Ped. Sem. Dec., 1901) observed a thirteen-months-old baby for four hours and found . . . impulsive or spontaneous, reflex, instinctive, imitative, inhibitive,



expressive, and even deliberate movements with . . . attempts *to do* almost anything which appealed to him. . . . A teacher noted the activities of a fourteen-year-old boy during the study time of a single school day with similar results." Among certain devices for testing muscular control and precision of movement, one called a "tremograph, a thimble attached to a pivoted lever moving freely in all directions, showed that (young) children could not hold the index finger still for half a minute"; "that in trying to sit still the child sets its teeth, holds the breath, clinches its fists, and perhaps makes every muscle tense with a very great effort that soon exhausts." . . . "The education of the small muscles and fine adjustments of larger ones is as near mental training as physical culture can get, for these are the thought-muscles and movements, and their perfected function is to reflect and express by slight modifications of tension and tone every psychic change. Only the brain itself is more closely and immediately an organ of thought than are these muscles and their activity, reflex, spontaneous, or imitative in origin."

These few quotations taken from a single chapter of the work on psychology just referred to, among a voluminous amount of evidence illustrating the need of a proper understanding of motor power in the child, may be alone sufficient criticism of those antiquated school standards which often gauged merit by the child's faculty of adjusting itself for the longest period of time and as near as possible to the rigidity of the

school desk; a discipline which was bad enough in those days in its after effects on the child's physical, if not moral nature; but which, if enforced upon this generation, would be far more harmful in its effects. "The testimony of those most familiar with the bodies of children and adults, and their physical powers, gives evidence of the ravages of modern modes of life that, without a wide-spread motor revival, can bode only degeneration for our race and nation. The large number of common things that cannot be done at all; the large proportion of our youth who must be exempted from many kinds of activity or a great amount of any . . . show the lamentable and cumulative effects of long neglect of the motor abilities, the most educable of all man's powers, and perhaps the most important for his well-being. . . . Civilization is so hard on the body that some have called it a disease, despite the arts that keep puny bodies alive to a greater age, and our greater protection from contagious and germ diseases." "The progressive realization of these tendencies has prompted most of the best recent and great changes motor-ward in education."

The reaction from these tendencies, as well as from the muscular restraints of the past in school regime, largely explain the inordinate love of sports and the almost savage indulgence in athletic exercises that are so widespread to-day among all classes.

This brief consideration of only one of the theories which has been influencing the changes in educational methods may serve to explain somewhat the attitude

of the modern educator toward the old-fashioned, formal drill in those rudimentary three R's, which were held to be the fundamentals in a good education. Yet in its radical opposition to the old regime and in its zeal to establish the new theories the present system is making somewhat of a paradox of education. It believes in releasing the child from formalism, and yet is trying to formalize and reduce to methods and systems the whole content of knowledge and experience in life in order that it may teach it to the child in the school, according to its own understanding and interpretation of such knowledge and experience. Under the old regime perhaps one fourth of the knowledge that entered into the child's life was learned in its formal lessons at school; and the remaining three fourths were acquired informally through the training and influence of home and church and other legitimate associations. To-day the child learns to ignore or discredit all knowledge or interpretation of life which does not come to it through the artificial medium of the school, which itself ignores or discounts the primary value of home and church as fundamental factors in education.<sup>1</sup>

“In education our very kindergartens, which out-

<sup>1</sup> “The decadence of value in education, as it is removed from the household, — a decay due, I believe, to the loss of the sympathetic motive, — may be well measured by the effect on the teaching of art which has come from the modern practice of giving over all such instruction to the public schools. While art work was done in the family or in the household workshops, but little removed from the influence of the hearth, it was more direct, more appealing to man, than in its modern school form. — *The Interpretation of Nature*, p. 209.

number those of any other land, by dogma and hypersophistication tend to exterminate the *naïve* that is the glory of childhood. Everywhere the mechanical and formal triumph over content and substance, the letter over the spirit, the intellect over morals, lesson setting and hearing over real teaching, the technical over the essential, information over education, marks over edification, and method over matter. We coquet with children's likes and dislikes, and cannot teach duty or the spirit of obedience. In no civilized land is teaching so unprofessional or school boards at such a low level of incompetence." <sup>1</sup>

Surely the one way out of this maze of difficulties in modern education is by the high road of the home, — the re-establishment of the home as the centre of the child's education. We must again reduce to a minimum the period of time in which a child shall be subjected to formal methods of instruction in the school, not only for the sake of its mental development but for its physical well-being likewise; <sup>2</sup> and we must use

<sup>1</sup> *The Psychology of Adolescence*. Preface, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> The following was taken from the *New York Tribune*, of April 28, 1905: "Washington, April 26. — Consul General Günther has forwarded to the Department of Commerce and Labor a brief summary of the argument of Dr. Otto Dornblüth, of Frankfurt, a specialist in nervous diseases, against the practice of holding afternoon sessions in public schools. In support of his position, Dr. Dornblüth points to the investigations instituted among sixteen thousand school children, by the distinguished expert in school hygiene, Dr. Schmidt-Monnard, of Halle, who found that the number of sick among the children attending morning and afternoon sessions was by one half greater than among children who attended sessions in the forenoon only. The investigations by Professor Koppmann, of Leipsic, led to the same conclusion.

Dr. Dornblüth favours a morning session of five hours, giving a resting

every resource at our command to create and sustain an ever-increasing maximum of home influence in the child's life of the best and most efficient kind for its moral and mental development. This can be realized most effectively by systematic and practical co-operation of the school with the home. By this it is meant that the resources of the home should be organized and employed by the official school authorities: that all that the child can do best in the home under the tuition and guidance of its parents or elders should be done there; and all the knowledge it acquires through the assistance of the latter, whether by formal or informal training or instruction, should be properly credited to the home, if it passes the standard tests made by the school, and should be rewarded according to the same scale of value by which the teacher's services are estimated.

pause of fifteen minutes at the end of each hour. He says that the afternoon sessions exhaust the vitality of the children, disturb their digestive organs, and tire their brains. From a medical standpoint, afternoon sessions should be abolished. The afternoon hours should be given to play, outdoor exercises, and physical training. The selfish motives of many parents in not wishing the children at home, because they are bothersome and require supervision, should not avail against a reform which is necessary and beneficial for the little ones. The doctor suggests the establishment of public retreats, where the children who cannot be supervised at home may spend the afternoon hours in the care of one or more suitable adults. He suggests that these retreats be provided with implements and material, and that children desiring instruction in light handicrafts may be accommodated. This may give the initiative for training clever young women and good mechanics. Under the present system of instruction the pupils of the upper school classes attend forty-two and forty-four hours a week.

## XIV

# WOMAN'S PART IN THE SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT OF THE RACE

## THE WOMAN

THE old classification of woman under the condition of either wifehood or maidenhood kept the question of woman's mission in the world in very simple form. But the world's work has changed since then and woman's place in the world has changed with it.

"When higher civilization comes upon the lower it brings to the men the gun for the bow and arrow, or the slowly and painfully made device for the capture or killing of animals. . . . But it brings to the woman only better tools and processes for doing her old work, and she is lifted up."<sup>1</sup>

While woman is the historic and primitive worker in the world's household, man is ever seeking, or is being driven to find, new ways and means of meeting the burden of the human race's ancient curse of labour.

"One has only to look around him in travelling through countries lately touched by civilization to

<sup>1</sup> *Woman's Share in Primitive Culture.* By Otis T. Mason, Ph.D., curator of the Department of Ethnology in the U. S. National Museum; p. 238.

notice that men have to drop their old occupations for new ones. In fact, not five men in a hundred in the most favoured lands are at this moment pursuing the calling for which they were educated. But in the transitions from savagery to civilization, and in the vicissitudes of life, women go on housekeeping, spinning, using the same vocabulary, conning the same propositions, believing as of old, only making use of modified and better appliances. In this they are conservative, indeed, and the blood coursing through the brain tissue carries on the same commerce that has been familiar to women during many thousands of years.”<sup>1</sup>

Yet our generation has seen the introduction of new and revolutionary elements in industrial and social life. The motor power of steam and electricity operating the wonderful mechanical devices and engines invented in our time now performs the greater part of the labour, requiring mere muscular strength, which drew so largely in the past upon the physical energies of both men and women. The change all this has made in the moral and intellectual condition of woman is far greater than that which has been effected in her physical being and in her social status by the world's progress in civilization and culture. The measure of this change is drawn by the author of *Woman's Share in Primitive Culture* in a pen picture of an impression given by a visit to the World's Columbian Exposition.

“The place of honour was occupied by the colossal statue of a young woman in burnished gold. . . . Upon

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 274.

her right hand stood the building devoted to manufactures and liberal arts; upon her left hand the temple of agriculture; in the distance the dairy, the leather and the horticultural buildings. In the anthropological building, at the extreme south of the grounds, was an exhibit from the cemetery of Ancon, in Peru. One figure was of especial interest in this connection — the skeleton of an ancient Peruvian woman. It was in a crouching attitude, wrapped in the customary grave clothes, and about it were the spindles, cradle frame, pottery, and dishes of vegetables with which she was familiar in life, and from which her spirit was not to be separated in death. Spontaneously, the thoughtful mind connected the crouching figure with the statue in the place of honour, and with the noble buildings and scenes about it.”<sup>1</sup>

And if we would know the history of this striking contrast in the position of woman past and present, we can find it only in the record of the slow release of woman from that burden of physical labour inherited by the race as a legacy from its primeval degradation, and the major portion of which seemed in those ancient times to have fallen to the lot of woman.

“Division of labor began with the invention of fire-making, and it was a division of labor based upon sex. The woman stayed by the fire to keep it alive while the man went to the field or the forest for game. The world’s industrialism and militancy began then and there. Man has been cunning in devising means of killing beasts and his fellow-man — he has been the inventor in every murderous art. The woman at the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 285.



fireside became the burden bearer, the basket-maker, the weaver, the potter, agriculturist, domesticator of animals — in a word, the inventor of all the peaceful arts of life.”<sup>1</sup>

In the beginning this burden of physical labour kept woman bowed down to levels of intelligence so far below the mental altitudes attained by men under the impulse of ever new activities and occupations which engaged and constantly stimulated the development of all their mental and physical faculties, that man grew accustomed to consider woman as a creature of another order than himself by nature, instead of only by the inheritance of conditions and customs from which he had long since emancipated himself.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Preface.

<sup>2</sup> “If anyone doubts that woman is a burden bearer by inheritance let him take his stand near any market house or along a shopping street. There does not seem to be any bone in the body that is not in some way called on to bear its load. On the head it is toting. . . . The negroes of the Southern States brought with them the custom of toting, and the Irish as well as the Italian women are able to poise delicately almost any load on the calvarium. . . . But lower down than this are the true pack women, whom you may see by thousands in most Continental cities wearing knapsack fashion some sort of a device for bearing the impedimenta of life's struggle. By means of a Holland yoke the shoulders and the atlas are brought into requisition, not to mention the hands and arms. A milkmaid bears a pail of milk on her head and two more on her shoulders and arms by means of such a yoke. . . .

“As a beast of burden, whether in Germany or Mexico, or among the savage American tribes, woman in her carrying basket moves the food and household effects while her husband shoulders the gun or more primitive artillery. . . .

“In the interesting lecture of Lieutenant Peary, on his trip across Greenland, he represents an Eskimo woman carrying a rough stone for the foundation of a house, and computed that it could not have weighed less than three hundred pounds. The distance travelled was about twenty

A modern magician in horticulture, Dr. Burbank, of California, has lately set the world to marvelling at the wonderful changes that may be effected in the very organic structure of plant life by various methods of breeding and culture. Under new conditions of soil, atmosphere, and conjunction with other organisms, the original "character, appearance, and habits of a plant might be controlled or altered and new plants created out of a combination of others." In an infinitely more yards. The rock was slung on a walrus line and borne on the back. . . .

"A Dyak woman generally spends the whole day in the field, and carries home every night a heavy load of vegetables and firewood, often for several miles, over rough and hilly paths. . . . Besides this she has an hour's work every evening to pound the rice with a heavy wooden stamper, which violently strains every part of the body. She begins this kind of labour when nine or ten years old, and it never ceases but with the extreme decrepitude of age." — *Wallace, Malay Archipel.*, New York, 1869, p. 102.

The loads borne by the Kurdish women are thus graphically described: "In the early morning I often saw women, looking like loaded beasts, coming down the precipitous mountain-path, one after another, spinning and singing as they came — for they carry their spindles as they journey about. I saw women with great panniers on their backs, and babies on top of these or in their arms, going four days over that fearful Ishtazin pass, carrying grapes for sale and bringing back grain. Men said that women must suffer more before God forgave Eve's sin. A few years ago a woman from Jelbo came to my home in Geogtapa. Her husband, who was almost a giant, sickened in Gawar, and she told me she had carried him on her back all the way, four days' journey. I did not believe her then; now I do, for my eyes have seen what loads these women carry . . .

"In Paris, the ideal capital of the world, one who is abroad early enough will see bread women and vegetable women hauling wagons about the street; the soldier with his back load of equipment and ammunition, and the peasant woman with her back load of all sorts of industrial products, repeat the ancient story of civilization from the beginning. As long as the peace of Europe demands so much preparation for war, the woman's back will continue to support the civil government." — *Ibid.*, pp. 120-131, 133.

complex and vital way are the "character, appearance, and habits" of human beings "controlled or altered" by their environment and occupation. This is a truism among moralists as well as among scientists.

"The naturalists tell us that change in one bodily structure sets in motion a great number of co-ordinated changes throughout the entire system. The savage man in his normal life is ever changing: When a higher culture overtakes him he must lay down the bow and arrow and take up the hoe, a woman's implement. In the struggles for a living in the best of surroundings the man is to-day a farm hand, to-morrow cutting wood, the next day in the crowded city. . . . He must become adaptive, plastic, versatile. All the propositions and half-automatic activities that he acquires to-day are forgotten to-morrow, and instincts do not have time to mature. On the other hand, the women of a savage tribe, and the ordinary run of women in any civilized land, who change slightly the duties they have to perform, or their manner of doing them, need modify their conceptions and their opinions very little. The constant doing of the same things and thinking the same thoughts from generation to generation pass the bodily activity and the mental processes on to a semi-automatic habit."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "From an organic standpoint, men represent the more variable and the more progressive element, women the more stable and conservative element in evolution. . . . In various parts of the world, anthropologists have found reason to suppose that the primitive racial elements in a population are more distinctly preserved by the women than by the men. There can be little doubt that the smaller size of women as compared to men is connected with the preservation of the primitive character.

"We have, therefore, to recognize that in men, as in males generally, there is an organic variational tendency to diverge and progress; in women,

While it is still true, as Mason says, that "very few men are doing what their fathers did, so their opinions have to be made up by study and precedents"; and while it was true up to a very recent period that "nearly all women, whether in savagery or in civilization, are doing what their mothers and their grandmothers did, and their opinions are, therefore, born in them or into them," it is true no longer of the great majority of women in our time, and the plainest reason why the mental processes of these women differ from their predecessors is that almost the entire set of physical occupations relegated to women in former times have passed out of the hands of the woman of this generation; and her whole physical environment has undergone a change which has reacted upon her mind, as well as

as in females generally, an organic tendency, notwithstanding all their facility for minor oscillations, to stability and conservatism. So that when women do vary, as Burdach long ago remarked, they tend to vary more intemperately than men." — Havelock Ellis in *Man and Woman*, pp. 367-369.

"W. K. Brooks, in the *Condition of Woman from a Zoological Point of View* (*Pop. Sci. Month.*, June, 1879), characterized the female body, instincts, and habits as conservative, devoted to keeping what has been acquired by successive generations, as new layers of snow are added to glaciers. . . . The male is the agent of variation and progress, and transmits variations best. . . . An ideal or typical male is hard to define, but there is a standard ideal woman. Because her mind is, more than that of man, essentially an organ of heredity, we find that, although she may sometimes seem volatile and desultory, the fact that her processes seem to be unconscious emancipates her from nature less than is the case with man."

"Man is best adapted to the present; woman is more rooted in the past and the future, closer to the race and to a more generic past. . . . Woman is far nearer to childhood than man, and therefore in mind and body more prophetic of the future as well as reminiscent of the past." Professor G. Stanley Hall, in *The Psychology of Adolescence*, Vol. II, p. 566.

upon her moral being. A reviewer says, "The American home and its principles, springing from a former agricultural life, were arraigned by Professor Simon N. Patten, in the *Independent* of Dec. 1, 1904, for their effect of discouraging marriage under present industrial conditions. 'Men used to be glad to marry young,' he says, 'as wives were an economic help. But productive industries which were once classified as women's work are so no longer under modern perversions. A wife must now buy her chicken, not raise it; she must buy her butter, not churn it; buy her carpet, not weave it.' Wives and mothers then were income-earners, and were only incidentally income-savers. Now these former agricultural ideals of early marriage and productive labour under the home roof still persist, declares Dr. Patten, while industrial conditions have taken the married woman's productive work from under her roof-tree, to places where pride will not let her follow it. 'Married granddaughters of the buttermaker,' he says succinctly, 'incur censure if they cross the street to employ themselves in the dairy store there, even while their grandmothers are praised for thrift and energy.'"

Ancient ideals die hard. The old vision of the matron at the spinning-wheel still haunts many a man's dreams of the ideal woman. It is the industrial type of the past that he still seeks for his mate; and he says hard things of the modern woman at her books or active in the practical affairs of the industrial and social world of the present. The poetry of this type

of woman has yet to be written. We still quote the poetry of an age which depicted its own ideals of woman, and which expressed truth and beauty because it was true to the reality of its own period. That reality does not depict the type of our age, and our disappointment with this type is not always caused because the type is itself untrue, but because we match it to an ideal which can be no longer realized by us. Men must not criticise women for doing the work their hands find to do, since it is men who have themselves invented the very tools and prepared the very conditions under which this transformation in the occupations of women has taken place. Mason quotes Jules Simon's criticism of modern industrial conditions in their relation to women.

"From the moment when steam appeared in the industrial world, the wheel, the spindle, and the distaff broke in the hand, and the spinsters and weavers, deprived of their ancient livelihood, fled to the shadow of the tall factory chimney. The mothers have left the hearth and the cradle, and the young girls and the little children have run to offer feeble arms; whole villages are silent, while huge brick buildings swallow up thousands of living humanity from dawn to twilight shades." <sup>1</sup>

Maternity here, bowed with haggard face and toil-worn hands over the ceaseless grind of machine-set tasks that reap for her and her hungry babes only a bare pittance for the support of life, is, indeed, too

<sup>1</sup> *Woman's Share in Primitive Culture*, p. 5.

historically untrue to the ancient type of the mother, too much of an irony upon human ideals of maternity for the poet to find inspiration in such a picture.<sup>1</sup> Yet if man's poetic ideals of woman have suffered in the struggle between old and new conditions, there is a spiritual appreciation of the part she has played in that struggle which goes deeper than poetic dreams. Truly, as Mason says, "it is in the apotheosis of industrialism that woman has played her part so persistently and well. . . . If you could from some exalted position take in the exploitation of the earth and sea, the transformation of raw material into things of use, the commercial transactions involved in the sale of these commodities, you would be astonished to know how many of these wheels were set agoing by women in prehistoric times. . . . Her patient face may also be seen in the midst of our flying wheels, so that in Ezekiel's vision the rims that were full of eyes remind us of a modern cotton factory. The spirit of the

<sup>1</sup> Woman as a wage-earner is undeniably a failure as a child-bearer under the deplorable industrial conditions of the present. Moreover, if she must be a wage-earner anyhow outside the home, whether maid, or wife, or mother, she naturally feels unwilling to add the burdens of the latter conditions to the already heavy task of labour in shop or factory. Our National census informs us that there are over 5,000,000 women in this country engaged in occupations that take them outside the home, and this class is increasing relatively more rapidly than the like class of men. Recently the introduction of a bill in the House of Representatives by Mr. Gardner of New Jersey, at the request of Governor Guild of Massachusetts, provided for a systematic study and investigation of the industry of women and children. The bill carries an appropriation of \$300,000; and what is of still more significance in this connection, it is women themselves who are pressing it, principally The Women's Trade Union League of Illinois.



living creature in the wheels is the genius of industrialism originated and fostered in the world by women.”<sup>1</sup>

The material forces set in motion throughout the modern world by man's ceaselessly inventive genius are, therefore, much more responsible for the changes wrought in woman's condition than are her own inherent preferences for habits of life and ways of conduct which are in direct contradiction to her most primitive instincts and characteristics. In the older conditions of woman's labour, “the maternal instinct, the strong back, the deft hand, the aversion to aggressive employment, the conservative spirit, were in full flower,” for, though “her tools and materials and methods were of the simplest kind, her shop was ample enough, for it was the vaulted sky.” That these moral traits and physical aptitudes are too often missing in her now is caused more from defects in the new conditions of her labour than from faults in herself.<sup>2</sup>

While changes have been going on in modern industrial and economic conditions which have almost

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> “The present evil is that while obtaining their share of work women are not at the same time acquiring an adequate control of that work, and of the conditions under which it is carried out. They are forced to carry it out under conditions which were made for men by men, or, — little, if at all, better, — by men for women. Hence, women are subjected to an undue stress. What we see here is not the result of *work* upon women, but the result of work under unwholesome and unnatural conditions which they themselves have not controlled. It has been repeatedly shown that the four chief evils from which the workers of to-day suffer — long hours, low wages, irregular employment, insanitary conditions — in every case press more heavily on women.” — Ellis. *Man and Woman*, p. 351.



entirely disintegrated the plan of life, conduct, and occupation which was almost as a code of morals and a form of religion to women of previous generations, modern educational advancement has put woman into a category so different from that of the typical woman of the past in all its estimates of her mental, moral, and physical capacity, that it would make it seem as though the age had really developed a new sex in the so-called New Woman. But these estimates are often more superficial than vital; they reckon up effects more readily than they explain causes. We can find a clue to the right understanding of these changes in woman's nature, and to a proper estimate of them, only by pursuing inquiry into the conditions of life which created the social status of woman in the past; and which formed her ideas regarding her obligations both to her fellow-creatures and to God.

It must be kept in mind that, while man's motive for progress or development might spring from some abstract conception of truth or goodness, woman's motive ever clung about some *object* in the world around her, or some *objective* idea of truth and goodness in the world above her. And this, not because of any inherent incapacity for abstract conceptions of truth or goodness or Divinity, but because of her habit of interpreting her human relations and the obligations of her daily tasks as tangible and earthly forms or symbols of the higher things of the spirit. Mason describes from a naturalist's standpoint the difference between man's and woman's religion:

"In a general sense, religion is the sum of what is thought or believed about a spirit world and what is done in consequence of such thinking. What is thought about such a world constitutes its *creed*, what is done or what a people does under its inspiration constitutes the *cult*. The cult and the creed together form the religion of any individual or people.

"No one can fail to see, therefore, that the religion of women has been different from that of man, and at the same time similar. By all those thoughts and acts which the sexes have in common . . . their creed and cult are one. By all those thoughts and acts which are theirs by reason of the differences of life growing out of sex, their religion will not be the same.<sup>1</sup>

This characteristic of woman's religious consciousness has been one of the strongest conservative forces in perpetuating the ancient traditions and practices of religion, and in resisting the introduction of new interpretations of the supernatural. After all, it is the religion the child learns at its mother's knee that clings longest to the man's mental habit of approaching the unseen world, and dies hardest in his heart if disbelief in religious truth overtakes him. Religion in all ages has been as susceptible to the influence of women as woman has been herself susceptible to religion, and to

<sup>1</sup> *Woman's Share in Primitive Culture*, p. 241.

"With every operation of the primitive workwoman there was a quasi-religious ceremony. The commonest performance, not more dignified, perhaps, than washing dishes, was under the eye of any number of gods and witnessing spirits. There was a choice of seasons, a time of day, an attention to propitious and unpropitious omens, a desire to please, a dread to offend the gods; a formula, a ritual, a song. The uninitiated observer overlooks all these, and yet they constituted the aroma, the bouquet of the savage woman's drudgery." — *Ibid.*, p. 244.

the Christian religion above all others. Naturalists find the cause of this in the peculiar attractiveness Christianity possesses for women through its appeal to the human heart. Ellis remarks that "if Christianity had been made for women only, it could scarcely have been bettered."<sup>1</sup>

Religion may be called the mother of mankind, in even a more comprehensive sense than that which calls the Church itself a mother. Religion sees the whole of truth — or truth as a whole. Science sees it in its parts — sees its construction. By its analysis of truth, it either builds up religion or pulls it down. It is masculine in this; as religion is feminine in conserving rather than in disintegrating truth. Religion reaches farther and comprehends wider experiences than science. Its philosophy is based on the accumulated facts and experiences of life. Science is forever speculating on the relations of single facts and experiences to each other, and misses "the sense of the whole" as well as its prophetic meanings. "Philos-

<sup>1</sup> "The fascination which Christianity . . . possessed for women lay in its special appeal to their conservative instincts, and in its liberation of their most native impulses. A recent writer, after discussing the worship of love among primitive peoples, and its suppression in Roman times, remarks: 'The cult of love, after having accomplished the cycle of its evolution, returned to the point of its departure. This was the marvellous star which conducted the Magi to Bethlehem towards the cradle of the Divine Child. The celestial call of love, of the love which extends over all our thoughts and actions, of the love of our neighbour, of love faithful and indissoluble for woman, in a word, the call of love itself, entire and eternal, which the first Christian word proclaimed, appeared as the veritable *culte de l'amour* and replaced the Epicurism of decadent Rome.'" — *Man and Woman*, p. 370.

ophy, like poetry, is prophetic: 'The sense of the whole,' it says, 'comes first.'"

"Women take truth as they find it," said Burdach — an authority quoted by Ellis, — "while men want to create 'truth.'" "The latter method," adds Ellis, "leads further — if only further into error. Women are more ready than men to accept what is already accepted, and what is most in accordance with appearances. It is inconceivable, for instance, that a woman should have devised the Copernican system. It is difficult to recall a woman who for any abstract and intellectual end has fought her way to success through obloquy and contempt, or who without reaching success has been willing to die for her convictions like some of the intellectual heroes of history." <sup>1</sup>

Women will, indeed, more readily die for what they *love* than for what they believe. Stanley Hall says "the normal child feels the heroism of the unaccountable instinct of self-sacrifice far earlier and more keenly than it can appreciate the sublimity of truth." (*Am. Jour. of Psychology*, January, 1890.) And Ellis remarks that "In this respect women remain children; and that they do seems to result from the organic facts of a woman's life." <sup>2</sup> He quotes another authority as saying that "men's minds are naturally inductive, women's deductive." <sup>3</sup>

Women constantly attribute significances to external things from their habit of looking at things in their

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.

<sup>3</sup> *Influence of Women on the Progress of Knowledge.* By T. Buckle.

psychological rather than in their actual relations. "The psychological states of woman, induced by many generations of inherited proclivities, which have been strengthened by use and seclusion . . . have had a large share in the creation of primitive myths and cults. . . . All her strange and seemingly foolish actions should be studied with the greatest care in the light of her home life by those who would form true conceptions of beliefs and customs which thrust themselves upon our own firesides." <sup>1</sup>

Indeed, we may not attribute altogether to the primitive woman that habit of mind which conceives the supernatural in objective forms only. Women in the present are as prone to cultivate their relations with the supernatural only through the senses; and to express these relations in the most intimate and familiar terms. As hinted above, ages of seclusion and isolation in the life of women have fostered the growth of this habit of mind in them. They had need to people their solitude with imaginations of the objects of their love and worship in order to make that solitude more endurable. A curious study of the sort of innocent egoism a life of seclusion may develop in the feminine

<sup>1</sup> *Woman's Share in Primitive Culture*, p. 251.

"On the psychic side, women are more inclined than men to preserve ancient customs and ancient methods of thought. In Russia, spells and other primitive methods of solving the difficulties of life are in the hands of women who have a recognized position as witches and soothsayers. In Sardinia, Sicily, and the remote valleys of the Umbria, many ancient beliefs and pagan rites, which are even of prehistoric character, are still preserved by women." — Quoted by Ellis, from Lombroso and Laschi, *Il' Delitto Politico*, Vol. II, p. 8.

mind is found in some stories by Agnes Repplier, published recently under the title of *In Our Convent Days*. They are a series of gentle satires on some of the customs and traditions observed in a certain conventual system of education that was in use during the last generation. The author describes her own mental development and some of her spiritual experiences as a pupil under this system. She tells of a self-imposed test made one time of her loyalty to the temporal and spiritual interests of "Reverend Mother," in which she failed miserably because of her inability to refrain from eating chocolate custard. "Perhaps, if I had offered it up, Reverend Mother would cross the sea in safety. Perhaps, because I ate it, she would have storms, and be drowned. The doubtful justice of this arrangement was no more apparent to me than its unlikelihood. We were accustomed to think that the wide universe was planned and run for our reward and punishment. A rainy Sunday following the misdeeds of Saturday was to us a logical sequence of events."

Yet with all this peculiar tendency of woman to settle into mental states and moral convictions that keep her intellectual development within strictly prescribed limits, woman is characterized by far greater diversities in temperament and disposition than man. Her variability of mood is her most apparent historical trait; and the one, too, which has most attracted the admiration of man, while it at the same time has been the severest test of his patience.

Yet even the poet has praise for this trait:

"Time cannot change, nor custom stale her infinite variety."

It is, in fact, the index of the deepest psychological difference that exists between man and woman. Psychologists describe this difference in the psychic states of both by saying that, while man lives on a "plane" of consciousness, woman lives on an ever-varying "curve." "While a man may be said, at all events relatively, to live on a plane, a woman always lives on the upward or downward slope of a curve. This is a fact of the very first importance in the physiological or psychological phenomena in women. Unless we always bear it in mind, we cannot attain to any true knowledge of the physical, mental, or moral life of women."<sup>1</sup> In truth, many of the physical characteristics which seem to mark her as the "weaker vessel" are related more to her psychological nature than to her vital organs. In other words, her physical "weakness" is more often apparent than real. It is but the external effusion of those psychic changes within her that are constantly gathering and expending their forces through her physical nature. This complexity of woman makes it harder to diagnose the actual symptoms of organic weakness in her; and physical-minded men have tried to simplify the problem by an almost morbid insistence upon pathological aspects of this weakness which are often wholly imaginary, and which might be classified more correctly, perhaps, as purely

<sup>1</sup> *Man and Woman*, p. 248.



psychological, if not perfectly normal physical states. Statistics show that women live longer than men; and their tenacity in holding on to life under the greatest extremity of physical suffering, if not their actual endurance of pain, is proverbial. Perhaps the commonest misapprehension about them is that nervous strain generally proves fatal to them; and yet, so creditable an authority as Ellis says, "On the whole, the more serious diseases which produce very gross lesions of the nervous centres are more common in men; the slighter and so-called 'functional' diseases are more common in women. For this reason insanity and nervous diseases are much more fatal in men; women tend to recover, although they may again relapse." As to the greater mental differences and distinctions among men, he says, "Genius is more common among men by virtue of the same general tendency by which idiocy is more common among them: The two facts are but two aspects of a larger biological fact — the greater variability of the male."<sup>1</sup>

But woman's very versatility of mood or disposition — which is simply the quick responsiveness of her inward being to the influences of her outward condition or contacts — is the faculty through which her whole nature may become narrow and barren of all healthy human impulses; because, more than man, woman, as we have seen, is the creature of her outward conditions. Her mobility under the formative influences of these conditions may prove either a blessing

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 350, 366.



or a curse to her; while she is by nature almost powerless to shape its tendencies in either direction. While her inmost being may yearn after something better than the thing which holds back the growth of heart or mind, yet she will still cling to that which dominates her, to the conditions that surround her, be they good or bad; often loves them with a blind, unreasoning loyalty, and gives them up reluctantly when the moment of release comes. This trait in her is the result of generations of loyalty to the tasks and obligations lying nearest to her hand to do. In the language of the naturalist, it is a moral outgrowth of the "domestic habit" which kept woman by the fireside and the cradle, while man wandered far afield in search of ever new resources and inspirations for his personal efforts. "At the very beginning of human time, woman laid down the lines of her duties, and she has kept to them unremittingly ever since."<sup>1</sup>

To say that she has forsaken them in these latter days is to tell only half the truth about this world-wide transformation in the condition of woman. If the world had not changed all its ways of life, woman of herself, perhaps, would have never changed. She cannot *think* herself out of a condition as man can who reasons out the wrong or the mistake of things, until, under the influence of his mental conviction as to the right, he spurns the old at one bound, heart free to take up with the new as soon as it is acquired. Woman loves the things she is *used* to; and often for no better

<sup>1</sup> *Woman's Share in Primitive Culture*, p. 3.

reason. It is another evidence of her resemblance to the generic type of the race; and is associated, too, with the development in her of the domestic habit: The very performance of the tasks and the bearing of the burdens which formed this habit became in time to her only a labour of love.<sup>1</sup>

Again, owing to this same adaptability to the things about her, and her instinctive, almost unconscious, responsiveness to outward influences, she can be cultivated both mentally and spiritually to a degree perhaps unattainable by ordinary men; for the growth of her capacity for assimilating influences and ideas seems able to keep pace with every increase in the number and variability of these ideas and influences. Professor Hugo Munsterburg, in his studies of American social life, is quoted as saying that the average suitor of the intellectually trained young woman of to-day can with difficulty be matched with her in mental gifts. And Stanley Hall says, "The long battle of woman and her friends for equal educational and other opportunities is essentially won all along the line."<sup>2</sup> Men of narrow minds often grow fearful over this elasticity of a woman's mental and moral capacity, and seem haunted with a constant dread lest she will outgrow her "place."

<sup>1</sup> "She bears the special characteristics of humanity in a higher degree than man. . . . Her conservatism is thus compensated and gratified by the fact that she represents more nearly than man the human type to which man is approximating. . . . The large-headed, delicately-faced, small-boned man of urban civilization is much nearer woman than is the savage." — *Man and Woman*, p. 392.

<sup>2</sup> *Adolescence*, Vol. II, p. 612.

There is only one thing to dread in the development of a woman's life, and this is the danger of her being in a "place" which does not give her sufficient outlet for her true nature. She is in more peril when the avenues of sympathy and interest that lead from her soul to her fellow-creatures become choked with the petty concerns of her own small "place" in life than when they are open wide and free to the appeals of all human kind in its needs and helplessness. There is greater safety for her soul in having a limitless outlet for her sympathies through an ever-increasing interest in the welfare of her fellow-beings than in stifling her natural impulses in a narrow environment that may safeguard her from bodily harm only at a fearful cost to her spirit. It is only when her nature is starved for sympathy that there is danger of illegitimate outbreaks of her emotions; or of that ingrowing upon herself that results in hopeless sterility of all her faculties for sympathy with others, and in utter and confirmed selfishness when her

"thwarted woman-thoughts are inward turned."

The ever-disputed question as to woman's capacity for mental growth seems, therefore, most futile and foolish in the light of this fact as to her peculiar responsiveness to external influences and conditions, and her facility in adapting her nature in all its faculties to the full requirements of her "place" in life; whether that be little or great; or whether the conditions of it narrow or broaden, elevate or deaden, the faculties of

her heart and mind.<sup>1</sup> She may *feel* all the contradiction that wrong conditions make to her nobler instincts and aspirations, but she will seldom in such circumstances reason out from cause to effect. She is more likely to *live* the demonstration of these things than to explain it. Woman in the past has been a demonstration of the conditions of the past. Her life in former times is a historical document of peculiar value; for it is an almost unerring record, not only of the external conduct of humanity in past ages, but of its inner spirit and disposition also. "Her whole soul, conscious and unconscious, is best conceived as a magnificent organ of heredity, and to its laws all her psychic activities, if unperverted, are true."<sup>2</sup>

Woman, as we have seen, has grown mentally as well as morally through the highest exercise of the maternal instinct; which is the distinctive characteristic of all true women, even when the expression of it is not given to it in the ordinary and natural way through the actual office of maternity. "In the gift of children, nature has given to women a massive and sustained physiological joy to which there is nothing

<sup>1</sup> Ellis alludes to the "everlasting discussion regarding the 'alleged inferiority of women,'" and calls it "absolutely foolish and futile." "In the intellectual region," he says, "men possess greater aptitude for dealing with the more remote and abstract interests of life; women have, at the least, as great an aptitude in dealing with the immediate practical interests of life." — *Man and Woman*, p. 394. And Stanley Hall thinks that "woman is best in acting and judging in ordinary matters; man in those that are extraordinary." — *Adolescence*, Vol. II, p. 567.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 562.

in men's lives to correspond," remarks Ellis.<sup>1</sup> Fatherhood has not set its mark upon man's moral nature in the same way that maternity has stamped itself upon the soul of woman; for more far-reaching than even its physiological joy are the impulses it has created in woman's heart and soul — and through her to the heart and soul of humanity — toward the highest exercise of the human virtues of unselfishness, sympathy, kindness, and love. In the whole range of human development in the moral order the most outward reaching, upward growing tendency has been the instinctive unselfishness of the mother; expressed not only in maternity itself, but in the inherited solicitude of woman nature for the physical well-being of human kind, and in woman's natural susceptibility to the appeal of human needs or suffering. It is this solicitude which has often carried woman in our age away from the beaten track to which her sex restricted her in former times in following out her instincts of maternity. Woman has not altogether lost those instincts because she seeks a wider exercise of them than many a mother may be able to give through the physical expression of maternity alone. There was but one avenue in the past through which woman might expend these instincts of maternity, and their value to humanity was estimated only by the extent to which they were expressed in a physical form. But to-day, if the impulses of maternity have diffused themselves through avenues of service and activity, which have

<sup>1</sup> *Man and Woman*, p. 395.

exhausted much of their physical strength, in the development of the moral and spiritual expression of motherhood humanity has gained more than it has lost.

It is perhaps the vast army of women workers in our own time, in factory, workshop, office, and school, that is hoarding up the largest contribution to the world's treasury of human unselfishness and self-sacrifice. Here by many scores are the mothers working for their children; but by many hundreds of scores are the daughters working for the helpless and aged parents who in turn have become as children, to be cared for, nourished, and even humoured in all their wants. And in such care the young woman of to-day often responds to a nobler impulse of the maternal instinct than she might have felt in answering the more selfish call of her personal interests. If the conditions of life in these later days have made woman more of a bread winner than a home maker, she has only shown herself true in this to her ancient aptitude and disposition for doing best that duty which lay nearest to her hand to do; and approval at least for this should be her reward, even if we must deplore the necessity which shaped her duty thus for her. So fervent an admirer of the older ideals of motherhood as Stanley Hall has a gracious word of praise for the way in which women have met the demands of new conditions upon their lives. "Among the greatest achievements of our race, I esteem the work of woman, largely in the last generation or two, in working out manifold new careers for herself. . . . So

happy can the unwed now be in self-supporting vocations of charity, teaching, art, literature, religious and social vocations, and higher manual callings requiring skill, fidelity, taste, in many of which she naturally excels man, that she finds not only consolation but content and joy. Here she is making the best possible original solution of her great problems, imposed on her by existing conditions, while many declared she would never do so; and no lover of his kind can fail to bid her God-speed in all these endeavours.”<sup>1</sup>

If woman, too, is found more often abroad as a reformer, than at home as a conservator of the social forces upon which human life is built, in this also she has only followed a larger and more impelling impulse of her maternal solicitude for the well-being of all the world's children, as well as her own; and it marks a step onward in her development rather than a retrogression. The poor world needs to have its household set in order to-day as it never needed it before. The social fabric has become sadly disordered and soiled and utterly worn out in places by the conflicts which have raged in society during this generation between the classes and the masses, and in the upheavals and readjustments that have taken place in our economic, industrial, and domestic life. Woman must do her part as never before in setting in order the household of the world, which is society — the relations of class with class — and in making peace between the warring factions of the great human family. As the mother's

<sup>1</sup> *Adolescence*, Vol. II, p. 612.



love yearns most over those of her children who are the most needy and helpless in their ills or infancy, so do the hearts of high-souled women to-day feel attracted to those conditions in our social body wherein human beings suffer most from the ills of life, and from the unfortunate results of the industrial disorders and economic upheavals of our time. The finer her soul and her human sensibilities to the suffering and misfortune of others, the greater is the attraction of woman to conditions like these. Less sensitive natures or less cultured minds can look with indifference upon these things, or withdraw in æsthetic selfishness from personal contact with them. But these are not the normal types of women who shrink thus from the appeal of suffering. They are but the perverted products of a degenerate state of culture, which can be content with the fair surface of things that are corrupt at heart, or can accept without self-reproach the fruits of others' labour, suffering, and tears.

In all ages the work of the world has fallen not so heavily upon woman's shoulders as its blunders, its wickedness, and its misery have fallen upon her heart. And this is why woman's moral mission in the world has changed as the human race in its moral development has changed from generation to generation: going forward in goodness or in noble aspiration after ever higher good, or slipping backwards along the easy way of low aims and the inevitable degeneration that follows after them. So much is this true that one might say that the world's heart is the woman's heart: As the



woman feels and acts and lives in any generation, so does the world respond to the appeal of truth, beauty, and goodness, or turn toward folly and the false standards of mere physical existence. Woman is closer to the race than man, both by her office of maternity and through the predominance in her of heart over mind. And this is why she is susceptible to changes in the progress of the race that may leave man's life untouched in any vital part. Any influence which brings woman into closer correspondence with other human lives profoundly affects her personal life through the direct appeal such correspondence makes to woman's most vital and universal trait—her maternal instinct. Woman, under the influence of this instinct, is led to care about others and to concern herself with the interests of human beings on their account. Man is mostly concerned with his fellow-creatures, on account of their influence upon his own interests; and his attitude in general toward the race is characterized by a fine discrimination between those who belong to his own tribe or clan or country, and those who do not. The survival of the fittest to him means, usually, the survival of himself and those who belong to him, either by the bonds of blood or the claims of partisanship. The rare men who claim a wider world than this stand out in striking prominence in the history of this world's heroes. But all true, natural women know neither Jew nor Gentile, bond or free, when human nature makes its appeal to them for sympathy in its misery or succour in its needs. "To the true woman," says Le Gallienne, "the whole

world is her child, and she is its mother — whether it take the form of baby or husband, saint or sinner, or soldier limping from the wars.”

Nevertheless, the ideal of womanhood has ever been thought and dreamed of by man before woman herself conceived it or lived it in her own life. “This is why man’s destiny has always followed the woman: because she is the incarnation of his own dream of the desirable. As he wishes his mate to be, so is he in his own soul, and so will his life be fashioned. Never yet was a fine womanhood unfolded in a country where the dream and the desire of its fulfilment were not cherished in the heart of man. When woman sinks, as in Egypt and China, man stagnates. She is more than the ornament of society; she is the light that leads it, — a will-o-wisp flickering above waste places of sensuality and bogs of despair, or a clear star shining steadfast in the heaven of honour and light.”

“Woman is not the lesser man: she is the other half of humanity. There is no question of rank and position; there is question only of essential difference and vital relation. It is not the dividing line we should seek to find for her, but the line of juncture and union, so that the two segments may make one perfect sphere.”<sup>1</sup>

Yet this change and development in the condition of women in general have gone on at the cost of great struggle, suffering, and, perhaps, moral loss in the lives of individual women, whose temperament, character, or circumstances may have forced them to the

<sup>1</sup> *The Way to Womanhood.* By Dr. Henry Van Dyke.

front in this conflict between old and new conditions. In this they have but repeated the history of all growth or development in the human order. "To see the futurity of the species," said John Stuart Mill, "has always been the privilege of the intellectual élite, or of those who have learnt from them: to have the *feelings* of that futurity has been the distinction, and usually the martyrdom, of a still rarer élite. Institutions, books, education, society, all go on training human beings for the old long after the new has come; much more when it is only coming."<sup>1</sup> The pertinacity with which half-educated and wholly unscientific minds still continue to apply the tests of the past to a present which may have wholly outgrown their measure is indeed a moral martyrdom, if it is not a physical one, to those highly developed and rare spirits in every generation who forecast in their own lives that future condition of enlightenment or advancement toward which human life in general may be tending.

The refined intellect of man can often foresee the answer of the future to the problems of the present; but the intuitive turning of the woman's heart toward good reveals the future with a still wider vision, and a still deeper conviction of its reality. By all those traits in her nature which have made her find the solution of human nature's problems by *feeling* its needs rather than by knowing their causes, woman has been to the race in the past the sensitive medium through which its most actual contact with the supernatural

<sup>1</sup> *On Liberty*, p. 287.

has been felt; and it is through her traditional faculty of intuitive insight that modern science would even now solve some of the problems of human life that elude the investigations of men's minds. "Biological psychology already dreams of a new philosophy of sex, which places the wife and mother at the heart of a new world and makes her the object of a new religion; that will give her reverent exemption from sex competition and reconsecrate her to the higher responsibilities of the human race, into the past and future of which the roots of her being penetrate; and where the blind worship of mere mental illumination has no place."<sup>1</sup> Perhaps in much of the modern prejudice against the over-cultivation of her intellect a reasonable apprehension is felt lest this cultivation can go on only at the cost of her *intuitive* faculties for perceiving truth. Repeatedly this apprehension is expressed by moralists and scientists. Hall says, "If she abandons her natural naïveté and takes up the burden of guiding and accounting for her life by consciousness, she is likely to lose more than she gains"; and another authority remarks, that "women's fine and nimble minds are no doubt irretrievably injured by 'that preposterous system called education'";<sup>2</sup> and perhaps common experience verifies this only too often. Certain it is that a life lived wholly in the exercise of the mental faculties alone, or engaged in occupations which absorb the mind entirely, leaving no time or inclination for the claims of social

<sup>1</sup> *Adolescence*, Vol. II, p. 562.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Buckle, quoted by Ellis in *Man and Woman*, p. 308.

or domestic ties, seems to stultify woman's capacity for human feelings to a far greater degree than man can be affected by the same conditions. The inveterate prejudice against a merely intellectual woman is, therefore, the most rational of human instincts. The old-fashioned scorn of the typical "schoolmarm" of a generation or two ago — who was indeed a pathetic pioneer of the larger intellectual development among women which came later — was but a crude expression of a prejudice which is to-day as deeply felt against the segregation of women into educational institutions or in intellectual employments that shut them off entirely from the humanizing relations of ordinary life among their kind. The prejudice is not against intellect or education in women, but against the price exacted for these by a system of training which takes away in moral values more than it can return in mental advantages. The fault often lies more in the methods of the system itself than in the principle upon which it is founded. Enlightened educators have long seen the mistake of such methods and have made provision against them by associating the training of mental faculties with the development of human or social instincts, by providing an actual field of labour in which these instincts may find an outlet. Such a field is the plan of social work and service which is carried on in the settlement houses which are now associated with most of the colleges and universities that are near great centres of population; and which are to-day considered almost as great an essential

to the equipment of these institutions as the laboratory itself.

True education for woman can proceed rightly only along those lines of moral development which in the past aroused in her heart the noblest human impulses, love, sympathy, compassion, and mercy; — in a word, only by the expression in her of the highest and holiest forms of the divine impulses of motherhood — serving the helpless, succouring the needy, sympathizing with pain and misery — can woman grow spiritually and develop to its highest capacity that psychical insight into the problems of human life which is a higher gift than any mere intellectual enlightenment can bestow upon her. Higher education stands in the way of her proper development only when it is merely “high”: — when it climbs to a mental altitude at the cost of that moral breadth and poise which contact and communication with the vital common interests of human life give to the mind alive to their deep significances and to the heart open to their appeal.

If woman has been vitally influenced in her moral nature by these modern changes in her mental life, their practical influence upon her religious nature has been no less far-reaching. It may be said that the mere devotee type of woman no longer represents the highest development of the religious consciousness in the sex. It is a type which distinctly belongs to the past; and to that period particularly during the last century in which poetry had more to do with piety than religion itself. This type created a certain cult of

devotional literature whose relics may be found still amongst us; although the reading of it is, perhaps, indulged in now only surreptitiously by the devout who have kept immune from the spiritual discipline of mental training — for surely nothing is more searching to the spirit than some of the revelations which psychology makes occasionally as to the true interpretation of certain “spiritual” states of the human consciousness. Hall says, “Mental training disciplines the feelings, increases the will power, and sometimes transforms a weak, sentimental girl into an honest, healthy woman”; and psychology may yet play as useful a role in regulating the proper development of the religious consciousness as those practices of asceticism in the past which were used primarily to teach the human spirit its right relations to the supernatural.

The part played by woman in the life of religion to-day may be, perhaps, more practical than pious — and in this she has lost instead of gained. But her attitude in general toward religion is less sentimental and emotional; and in this she has gained much in mental sincerity and in moral strength. If the religious minded woman of to-day seeks less conventional or conventual ways of expressing her aspirations after a life of personal holiness in herself and personal service to her fellow-creatures than were laid down for women in the past, it is not because the spiritual ideals of the past are no longer an inspiration to her, but because she is expressing these aspirations in a language which is best understood by an unconventional age — an age



which looks for *meaning* more than for form, and which rejects conventionalities with impatience when they hinder the full expression of the spirit. "God uses many languages, and continually approaches new generations of men in new forms of speech; so that each generation must master a new tongue if it would understand the Divine message." Besides, woman to-day needs less the moral supports and the physical barriers that were built about women in the past, who were trained neither physically nor morally to withstand dangers and temptations of a cruder civilization than our own. The pure in heart and the sincere in purpose claim a protection, a reverence, and a support higher than any physical safeguards can give; and they seem ever to win such strength from above.

"So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity,  
That when a soul is found sincerely so  
Ten thousand liveried angels lacquey her,  
Driving far off each thing of guilt and shame."

"Men need the vision of holy men and women walking stainless along the perilous ways of life, indifferent to petty ambitions, lifted above the pride of place and power, consecrated to purity, to righteousness, to sweetness, and to service; the beautiful company of those whose lives are revelations of the heart of the Infinite, and upon whom, amid the shadows of time, the light of immortality visibly rests."

"But these stainless and radiant spirits have not ceased to walk among men because ideals of service have changed their forms, and the active modern age



has succeeded the meditative Middle Age. The saint of to-day is not less saintly because she wears no distinctive garb and seeks no refuge from the storms of life. In all the ways of life to-day, in every field of work, in a thousand obscure households, there are saints who are loved but who are not recognized as saints. To know the saint under all garbs is perhaps to have in one's self something which responds to holiness; to possess something akin in its possibilities, though not in its development, to saintliness." <sup>1</sup>

Religion must always have its symbols to express the inconceivable character of the Divine; and the world that to-day rejects with impatience the "externals" by which the religious consciousness of yesterday expressed its conceptions of the supernatural will be found to-morrow setting up a new code of signs and symbols that will be of no greater value than the old ones as permanent interpretations of Divinity. But in the moral order it would seem as though we have

<sup>1</sup> *A Saint of To-day. Outlook*, Sept. 26, 1903.

"Every age has its saints, but it often happens that an age does not recognize its holy men and women until the light of immortality interprets them. This lack of discernment is due, not to any unwillingness to see, but to the tenacity of accepted forms and ways of expression. Sainthood is still defined in many minds with asceticism, and the saint who appears among us, living in all the great human relations, bearing the common lot, speaking the universal human speech, passes on her way unnoticed because those around her are looking for the mediæval dress, the withdrawal from the world, the downcast eyes. Blessed are the saints who sought holiness, in other times, in escape from the world, and became types of the pure and good in ages of violence, passion, and corruption. In its calendar of saints, as in its tender and reverent regard for the mother of Christ, the Roman Catholic Church has recognized and responded to a deep and wholesome human instinct." — *Ibid.*

passed beyond the stage where the Christian sense of righteousness will accept a semblance or a figure or a mannerism of virtue and goodness for the quality itself. Never before in history has human character been put on trial as it is to-day, nor its inherent or sham virtues more unsparingly appraised by a free-spoken public opinion. The Pharisee of to-day is hard pressed indeed to conceal his hypocrisy, and must resort to other and more subtle dissemblings in assuming a virtue which he has not than long robes and broad phylacteries and salutations in the market-place. There is a stern distrust in the modern mind of goodness which is too conspicuous, of virtue which is made a matter of profession; and this distrust yields only to one proof of the genuineness of truth and goodness: their *practical* results in the lives of those who profess them. The plea of the professionally good man or woman must be silent as to words, but eloquent as to deeds, in order to impress and win respect and admiration from the Christian world to-day. Indeed, why should not our heritage of accumulated Christian experience have taught us to recognize at once all the traits of genuine goodness in human nature, and make us quick to detect its imitation under any guise?

“Different types of spirituality are brought forward by God to sanctify men in new conditions of life. . . . Our age is not an age of martyrdom, nor an age of hermits, nor a monastic age. Although it has its martyrs, its recluses, and its monastic communities, these are not, and are not likely to be, its prevailing types of

Christian perfection. Our age lives in its busy marts, in counting-rooms, in workshops, in homes, and in the varied relations that form human society, and it is into these that sanctity is to be introduced. These duties and these opportunities must be made instrumental in sanctifying the soul. For it is the difficulties and hindrances that men find in their age which give the form to their character and habits, and when mastered become the means of divine grace and their titles to glory. Indicate these, and you portray that type of sanctity in which the life of the Church will find its actual and living expression."

"This, then, is the field of conquest for the heroic Christian of to-day. Out of the cares, toils, duties, afflictions, and responsibilities of daily life are to be built the pillars of sanctity of the Stylites of our age. This is the coming form of the triumph of Christian virtue." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Rev. Isaac T. Hecker, Paulist*, p. 290.

## XV

### SOME MODERN INTERPRETATIONS OF CHARITY

“Love thy neighbour as thyself.”

#### THE SETTLEMENT

THE name “Settlement” in these days has come to be almost as blessed a word as “Mesopotamia” — to borrow a favourite standard of comparison with blessedness. It is a common thing nowadays to attach the name “Settlement” to any form of religious, philanthropic, or social endeavour which aims to make a direct appeal to the sympathy or support of the public at large; for, in a vague sort of way, the settlement movement has become associated in the public mind with all that stands for personal disinterestedness, unselfishness, and even heroism in social, religious, and charitable effort that aims to uplift the masses. “There is a sort of sentimental cant which is indulged in by those who have but slightly touched the problem of the Settlements, which represents the university men and women as youthful martyrs bringing all that is illuminating into places of absolute darkness. ‘Elevation by contact’ is a phrase which these like to use. There is also a cant of those who have seen somewhat more

of Settlement work, which represents the residents as combining together in a sort of club for the sake of a period of romantic existence, which they in a measure justify by learning much out of the experience of their poorer neighbours.”<sup>1</sup> This cant of the settlement idea has been readily learned by the ignorant, the insincere, and the cynical. The idea has passed, indeed is still passing, “through the inevitable phases of laughter, contempt, and opposition,” which as someone says must try the mettle of all great movements. Its phrases are bandied about by flippant newspaper reporters when “writing up” the latest heroine who has laid herself on the altar of humanity in a settlement in the slums; the socialist reformer borrows its language occasionally in order that his unpopular, revolutionary principles may become identified with a movement which has won prestige and respect among the people; and not a few institutions for educational, social, or charitable work, founded and conducted on principles quite contrary to the settlement plan, have adopted the terminology of the latter in describing their work because they find it popular and persuasive in drawing attention and support from the people. The most potent word, in fact, which the reformer of to-day has in his vocabulary is “the Settlement.” The adaptability of the word has lent itself peculiarly to every kind of religious or social reform, whether it be conducted according to the most enlightened modern methods or

<sup>1</sup> *Philanthropy and Social Progress*, p. 65. *The University Settlement Idea*. By Robert A. Woods.

hampered with the outworn systems of the past. The mantle of charity is not more ample in its shelter for human delinquents than the meaning of the word "Settlement" is wide in its application to the needs of existing human conditions. Its methods of meeting these needs are almost as diverse and as numerous as the needs themselves; and this is why any particular form of settlement effort only inadequately represents the whole idea. It is also the reason why the policy of the settlement cannot be strictly defined; nor its methods cast into rigid formulas to be learned by rote and applied indiscriminately to all needs, as are the formulas of an educational system. "The lines along which (its) influence shall act are varied, intricate, and ill-defined. It must come close to the lives of the people themselves. It must be keen and sensitive to every sort of delicate, subtle feeling they have. It must, in short, be a personal influence. The person must act in a close, continued intimacy with those to whom he comes; that is, he must be a neighbour. He must join freely in the neighbourhood life. He must have so varied an interest in human affairs that he shall be able to enter actively into sympathy on some side of life with every one of them. He must not establish a propaganda. He must not at first even have methods. He must not set about building up one more institution. He must not hurry. Above all, he must not be anxious about results. The children of this generation seek for a sign, but there shall be no sign given them; he must be content that the

generations of the future shall see his work in its true light." <sup>1</sup>

With all its flexibility of policy and its disposition to be all things to all men the settlement has a distinct, well-defined mission in modern life; and its points of resemblance to other and more ancient systems and methods of social or religious reform are for the most part only apparent or superficial. The differences between it and many of these systems are fundamental and far-reaching. The methods of older systems were good in their own time; and they are perhaps found to be the most effective still for conditions which have been bequeathed by the past to the present and in many places exist unchanged or uninfluenced by a new environment; but when these methods call themselves by a new name, while still retaining their old character in practice and principle, they are bound to lose their old efficiency, and to gain nothing that will replace it in the superficial new addition. Church societies under the form of temperance clubs, sewing circles, young people's sociables, boys' clubs, charitable associations to aid the poor or the sick, classes of instruction in religious or secular knowledge, mothers' meetings, etc., have each a definite and special aim in view, and each can accomplish it best by working toward it under a positive and well-defined statement of its purpose. It is a mistake for any of them to assume that the mere works of the settlement, incident to its general conduct and policy only, constitute in themselves the settlement

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 62.

character or motive and alone establish a settlement foundation; or that a group of persons engaged in such works as a natural consequence form an assembly of settlement workers. The wide-spread notion that the settlement ideal is wholly embodied in good works only, and quite independent of the personal motive or character of the worker, is mostly to blame for this misapplication of terms. But this seems to be an occult doctrine even to many well-meaning persons. A settlement worker thus complains in a letter to a friend of her difficulty in making this doctrine appreciated by a zealous pastor: "Work as I may here — it does not satisfy me. I am never really *with* the people. The pastor of the little church I attend speaks in glowing terms of the work I can do here — visiting families, telling them their homes are dirty, and so on. He positively cannot understand me when I tell him that the settlement ideal is not exhorting; not catechising; but merely *living*." Indeed, there are cases where the motive or point of view of many a highly-lauded charity worker would be not only incompatible with the settlement spirit, but would be a flat contradiction to it when this motive is merely *charity*, in the sense that word has taken on from its association with the spirit of patronage, condescension, and a certain superior attitude of pity and benevolence assumed toward the poor and unfortunate. The contrast to such an attitude as this which is manifested in the approach of true settlement workers toward their neighbours tells the whole story of the fundamental difference between



the spirit of this new movement and the disposition of older systems of philanthropy.

“Settlements and Neighbourhood Guilds start out with the conviction that we are all of a piece, and that shirt-workers and tobacco-strippers have natures very much like our own; that what delights us would, if their powers of enjoyment could only have a chance to develop a little, delight *them*; that where we go, often with stumbling steps, they might, when once they were accustomed to the way, walk fast and fleet. And what leads these young men and women to fling themselves in among the masses of the disinherited and the despairing is not that they feel that they owe to them merely pity or prudence, advice or admonition, but that they owe *themselves*, in the bonds of a common kindred and fellowship, in the unity of a common life.

“They do not assume to stand upon any higher plane; they come to be taught quite as much as to teach, humbly to ask and receive as well as to offer and bestow. They see that we are never on the terms with a man on which we can do him the highest good until we are as ready to let him do us a favour as to extend one to him.

“And this is not a mere bit of sentiment or pretence; it is the perception of a deep and glorious truth. Some of you I trust have found it out; you have learned that among the poor, among the people who live in narrow courts and crowded tenements, there are riches of reality and simplicity, of unselfishness and love, for which you looked in vain, perhaps, in houses rich with elegance and fair with culture; and in hours of sorrow or disappointment you have been given to feel about you the arms of a warm humanity full of healing and strength . . . Not that there are not times of dis-

couragement; as an old writer says, 'He who seeks to serve the poor will have sweet moments and bitter hours'; but that the sense that does come to you, from time to time, of the establishment of such a relation among all men *here*, as many good and holy men have dreamed of as possible only in some future state of existence, recompenses for all your toil."<sup>1</sup>

A settlement which could not boast of its works or of its results in figures has been looked at with a sort of mild contempt by that thorough-going type of Christian worker who finds no time to apply the ounce of prevention in his zeal for distributing pounds of cure according to the well-established formulas of past systems. "In the initial stages of the movement any strictures made upon it, in comparison with the work of established institutions or organizations following a few easily defined lines and acting through specialists of long experience, must be considered as resulting from a false estimate of what settlement work is in idea, as well as of what, under its limitations, it must for some years yet be in fact. For the present, the work must be done by amateurs, for there are no professionals."<sup>2</sup> It must not now and it never may be too closely organized, because it consists so largely of turning to social account delicate kinds of influence which cannot be borne through the channels of organization. And too much regularity and constancy must

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, *Philanthropy — Its Success and Failure*. By Rev. J. O. S. Huntington; p. 136.

<sup>2</sup> This statement was made in 1902, and does not altogether apply now when we have a goodly multitude of "professional" social workers.

not yet be expected when those who enter this work have so largely to live upon locusts and wild honey, and to go clad in camel's-hair." <sup>1</sup> The pressure of this kind of criticism, against which Mr. Woods pleads, and the demand for some kind of tangible evidence of the utility of the settlement that would look well in print, has unfortunately driven many a settlement into strange and devious ways in vindicating its reason for existence. "When I read, as I did yesterday," says Jacob Riis in *The Battle with the Slum*, "a summing up of the meaning of settlements by three or four residents in such houses, and see education, reform politics, local improvements, legislation, characterized as the aim and objects of settlement work, I am afraid somebody is on the wrong track. These things are good, provided they spring naturally from the intellectual life that moves in and about the settlement house; indeed, unless they do, something has quite decidedly miscarried there. But they are not the object. When I pick up the report of one settlement and another, and find them filled with little essays on the people and their ways and manners, as if the settlement were some kind of laboratory where they prepare human specimens for inspection and classification, then I know that somebody has wandered away off, and that *he knows that he has*, for all he is making a brave show to persuade himself and others that it was worth the money. . . . The fact is we have all been groping. We saw the need and started to fill it, and

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* *The University Settlement Idea.* By Robert A. Woods; p. 68.

in the strange surroundings we lost our bearings and the password. We got to be sociological instead of neighbourly. Here is the password, 'Neighbour.' If a settlement isn't the neighbour of those it would reach, it is nothing at all. 'A place' said the sub-warden of Toynbee Hall, 'of good-will rather than of good works.' We had become strangers, had drifted apart, and the settlement came to introduce us to one another again, to remind us that we were neighbours."

Plainly, this definition of the object of a settlement suggests an application of the spirit of charity that brings us back to the Gospel meaning of the word; and drops out of consideration not only the high-sounding theories of socialist reformers but the whole scheme of that false kind of charity which only perpetuates the conditions of poverty and misfortune by relieving their results without remedying their causes; and which too often prefers to live in the bliss of ignorance regarding those causes. The true settlement will shun no knowledge of the latter that may aid it in getting down to the roots of social disorders and injustices, and in building up its own influence strong and impressive enough to weaken and in time altogether repair the harmful effects of these disorders and injustices in the lives of the poor and unfortunate. It must itself learn thoroughly of these wrongs in order that it may teach others the lesson of them in a way that will make such knowledge profitable for good. As Mr. Woods declares with impressive earnestness:

“The movement of the Settlements will be false to its promise, it will cut off its own future, if it do not know for itself, and tell thinking people, and by its absolute statement of facts compel thinking people to hear, how the other half lives. The residents should become familiar with all that goes to make up the life of the people about them, — what homes the people have, their sanitary condition, their privacy (or lack of it), their adornment; what food and drink the people have; what clothes they wear; what work they do, and all the questionable conditions that surround the labour of men and women in these days; what wages they receive, and how well or ill they spend their money; what knowledge they are gaining; what amusements they have; all the little amenities of their lives; their cruelty, their unselfishness; their loves, their hates, their sins, their crimes, their hopes. Now this searching investigation can never be made by the mere canvasser or statistician. It comes only by long and loving acquaintance. Science and sympathy must unite if we are to have any living knowledge of the poor . . . seeing the lives of the people with that quickened vision which comes from a warm heart, representing them again with the faithfulness of the truth-loving mind. . . . And a settlement is false to its purpose if it do not take knowledge also of the organized forces of sin that are at work in its vicinity, . . . of the grim, inhuman evils that flaunt themselves in what are termed the less respectable sections of cities. . . . The time has come when the educated man and the educated woman must no longer merely shudder and turn away from the dark depths of life. The educated person cares little about the words and the ways of the sensationalist and the purveyor of artificial reforms. But he respects just as little that form of refined selfishness

which says, 'These things always have been and always will be; who touches them touches pitch.'" <sup>1</sup>

The difference between the charity of the past and the present lies more in our modern interpretation of social justice than it does in any difference in the sentiment of charity itself. Fundamental changes in our political and economic life have influenced profoundly our ideas regarding the rights of our fellow-creatures. "As society was constituted until the last few generations," says John Stuart Mill, "inequality was its very basis; association grounded on equal rights scarcely existed; to be equals was to be enemies; two persons could hardly co-operate in anything, or meet in any amicable relation, without the law's appointing that one of them should be the superior of the other. Mankind has outgrown this state; and all things now tend to substitute, as the general principle of human relations, a just equality, instead of the dominion of the strongest." <sup>2</sup> If we would make good our national profession of universal brotherhood we can stop at nothing short of the literal meaning of the word neighbour. It is no longer thought extraordinary or heroic to live up to such a literal interpretation of social justice as this; it is only regarded as consistent with the logical working out of the spirit of democracy when it seizes upon the heart and mind of the upright and sincere. Under the influence of such a spirit the conditions of poverty and misfortune make less of an

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 69, 71.

<sup>2</sup> *The Enfranchisement of Women.*

appeal to our emotions, perhaps, than they challenge our sense of justice and arraign us for our personal responsibility for these conditions. We do not enjoy having our emotions played upon by appeals to our pity and sympathy for human misery, nor do we take much pleasure in the feeling of mere benevolence exercised in behalf of our less fortunate fellow-creatures. Our sense of justice will rouse us to activity in removing causes of suffering more quickly than our benevolence or compassion can be moved to relieve its results. Or if our emotions are aroused by the latter they are only the avenue to the higher sense of justice — and in the refinements of justice we most often find the highest exercise of charity. Under the influence of the spirit of justice which a true democracy develops, we cannot regard poverty as a permanent and irremediable condition in the same sense in which it has been regarded in the past, and as many still regard it who live under old-world governments that support the distinctions of caste. We cannot look upon it as a pre-ordained arrangement of social relations which would enable one portion of the human race to work out its salvation by suffering hardship and hunger, while the other portion would gain merit and eternal beatitude, perhaps, by ministering indefinitely to such needs.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “In the Middle Ages, red-handed barons gave away large moneys to the poor out of their ill-gotten stores, in order to relieve their anticipations of reprisals made upon them in the *next* world; to-day, men do very much the same thing in view of possible reprisals in *this*. . . . There is so much at stake in the case of one possessed of a great deal of money, and the position in the world that that insures; to be brought to acknowledge that



Poverty to us is an evil in the sense that it is a disarrangement of the right order of things: a perversion of justice in some way has probably caused it, and we are as anxious to re-establish the right arrangement of things and see the aims of justice realized as we are eager to relieve the victims of these conditions. In his book on *Poverty*, Robert Hunter points out the difference between the kind of poverty that will always follow the human race, as sin will always follow it, and the kind which may be left behind with our past mistakes when the ends of both charity and justice shall be fulfilled. "The poor you have always with you, means, it seems to me, those who are in poverty of their own making — in consequence of their own defects. But just as surely as this is true, there are also the poor which we must not have always with us — those bred of miserable and unjust social conditions, which punish the good and the pure, the faithful and industrious, the slothful and vicious, all alike . . . those who are brought into misery by the action of social and economic forces. And the wrongful action of such forces is a preventable thing."

Methods of charitable relief and of social reform

one's wealth is the result of injustice, even if it were not one's own, would lead to such frightful consequences; to confess that one is living on goods stolen from the very poor that it is so pleasant to patronize would be so horribly humiliating; and to think of surrendering one's property would entail such social obloquy and involve the loss of so much social esteem, that we cannot be surprised that people of this class instinctively close their minds to any argument that might lead to such painful conclusions." — *Philanthropy and Morality*. By Rev. J. O. S. Huntington; p. 191.



which were devised under the political and economic systems of old-world governments did not stop to discriminate too finely between preventable and inevitable poverty and misfortune — it might lead to political complications and economic problems for which no solution and no radical remedy could be found under these governments. Such methods, therefore, inevitably, took the form of cure rather than of prevention; they were usually administered in the attitude of benevolence rather than of fraternity; they were ordinarily based upon the sentiment of commiseration in the benefactor rather than upon the sense of any social obligation to humanity; they generally assumed either that the poor were responsible for their own condition or that an all-wise Providence, for some inscrutable reason, discriminated between the poor and rich in the dispensation of this world's goods. Such an interpretation of charity as this is not only out of sympathy with all true manifestations of the spirit of charity in the lives of those saints and heroes in every age who made themselves brothers and even servants of humanity in order that they might become saviours of it; but it is absurdly out of time and place in an age which has reached at least a theoretical belief in the brotherhood of man, even if a practical realization of this belief is as yet a long way off. That it has become an anachronism fraught with an ominous menace to our social peace to attempt to apply the methods of the past to the conditions of the present in meeting the exigencies of poverty and distress was peculiarly illus-

trated recently in the protest of the idle London mobs who refused with curses the proffered relief of charity and demanded work as the permanent remedy for their ills. A writer on current economic problems in one of the popular magazines shows us by a vivid pen picture of conditions in a London slum the pitiful inadequacy of even modern methods of philanthropy in meeting these exigencies under a government which denies in theory at least that belief in universal brotherhood which is the fundamental principle of democracy.

"At Millbank, London . . . is a group of substantial flat-houses built and owned by the London County Council . . . to provide house-room for the increasing hordes of the poverty-stricken whose bony fingers are pointed in London's face. . . . The courts between are paved with asphalt, everything is clean, well-ordered, quiet, eminently respectable. In front is a little strip of park where the children play. On Sunday, July 2d, at noon, there came through one of the asphalt courts a young man, a little boy, and a young woman carrying a baby. They were dreadful to look upon, all of them clothed in dropping rags, emaciated, tallowy, and unclean.

"The woman had a vacant face, and next to no chin; the man had sloping shoulders, one higher than the other, and stooped. The boy reproduced, and exaggerated the physical defects of the man and woman. The man slowly led the way down the court singing. . . . He was singing 'Rock of Ages,' . . . to the tune used in the churches of England. They walked very slowly down the court and looked up at the windows. Two or three were opened and some halfpence were

thrown out, perhaps five. And thus, singing in this frightful fashion, they took their rags and their misery out of sight.

“They were the problem of London, those four, and they stood before the best answer that London has yet been able to make. It was for them that the flat-houses had been built, the courts paved, the doorways brightened, the sanitation perfected, the little park set with green, the millions of dollars expended — all for them. And they stood and sang in rags before the answer to the problem presented by their own existence, and from it men threw them halfpence. . . . The remedy is nothing; it helps not, it avails not, it is a mere straw in the current. Why? Because the trouble is so deep and radical you cannot cure it by treating symptoms. This dreadful singing creature and the swarming millions of his kind are the products of conditions in which a large part of the population is denied opportunity — and of nothing else. The remedy is an equal chance for all. . . . For the evil that opens wide its gulf at England’s doors, the one possible cure is democracy; but whenever democracy is seen approaching, then tradition and custom, the national habit of mind and the reverence for rank, combine with the interests that uphold the caste system to suppress the intruder. In one way or another they combine to suppress it. . . . Of the fact of the slum there is recognition, yes; and that in some way it is eating out the vitality of the nation. Slowly and through painful revelations these things have been forced home upon public attention. But there is nowhere in England any recognition that the slum inhabitant is a human being of equal rights with the fortunate, that he is the victim of conditions that surviving feudalism has forced upon him, that he is a bill for English society

to settle, that he is the inevitable result of a system for which he has no responsibility.”<sup>1</sup>

Besides the influence of political and economic changes in the modern world upon the social relations of the rich and poor, the principle of universal brotherhood, even though it is accepted as yet only as a theory by the most of us, has developed the ethical sense of our age enough to make us realize by sympathy the experiences or sensations of our fellow-creatures in suffering or misery; and this has made some of the older methods or practices of charitable relief, still in use by many well-meaning people, seem abhorrent to our sense of common humanity.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Charles Edward Russell in *Soldiers of the Common Good*.

<sup>2</sup> The manner of distributing doles practised in earlier times, and found still among the social customs of the old world, seems, from our modern democratic point of view, a strange irony on the true spirit of charity. In a paper on the Great Charitable Trusts of England, preserved among the records of the American Antiquarian Society, an account is given of the form and manner in which some of the charitable patrons of the poor in earlier centuries provided for the distribution of their doles. “The doles of England are of every conceivable kind, and present of themselves a curious study. . . . A lady is buried in St. Bartholomew’s churchyard, London, who left a fund to be distributed among aged women on every Good Friday, with the requirement that the recipients should pick up their sixpences from her grave. . . . At Hilderstone is a gift, established in 1625, by Sir Thomas Hunt, of 2d apiece weekly in bread, to six poor people, who, after service, should come every Sabbath day to the stone where his father lies and, kneeling, should say the Lord’s Prayer, and pray to God for the king and queen. At West Moulsey loaves and a barrel of beer are distributed annually at daybreak on November 13th. The baker’s cart is driven across a field, the loaves are thrown out and scrambled for by 70 or 80 people. . . . Of all the great number of doles in England it is probable that ninety per cent or more are of an injurious tendency, developing idleness, dissipation, and hypocrisy. Much has

"It is needless to point out," says Robert Hunter, "the degrading, levelling influence which the gathering together of the miserable exercises upon the more sensitive and respectable of the poor. It is the public system of indiscriminate doles which, nearly everyone is agreed, had better be abolished. . . . It is a common, wholesale, degrading treatment of the poor, which ends by destroying their self-respect and in many cases condemns the unfortunate applicants to a position of disrepute in the community. This is not true charity: it is brutality."

The new sense of humanity, with all its realizations of the true meaning of the word neighbour, has been forced upon us, not only by the logic of the political and economic principles which are inculcated by an enlightened democracy, but a new spiritual significance has been given to the old Christian principle of the unity of mankind in a common brotherhood by those teachings of modern science which have explained some of the literal meanings of this unity. "Applying to the general life of men the new conception of complex and intimate relationships which the advance of science has brought, and the idea of unity which is the note of the philosophy of the time, we are working toward vast changes in the life of modern society, not perhaps so visible and outward as those involved in the formation of nations, but so profound as to be likely to make over the inner and closer life of modern

been done of late in the way of converting these ill-advised charities to the support of education, and it is not improbable that, before many years, doles as at present administered will have altogether disappeared."

Vol. IV, p. 271.

people.”<sup>1</sup> We are beginning to realize that the development of the race has gone on according as the lines of differentiation between the various classes of mankind have been obliterated, and the antagonisms, prejudices, and misunderstandings arising only from these differences have been forgotten in the new and common interests of humanity. “All our endeavours to unite men in human associations, societies, and nations,” says Professor Shaler in *The Neighbor*, “depend upon the measure in which we may be able to overcome certain *instinctive* prejudices which grievously hinder such union of men in common endeavours which advance mankind.” In this respect modern progress has worked in harmony with the real spirit of Christianity which would break down every barrier that separates the members of the human family from a common fellowship in Christ. “The early Christians were pre-eminently non-resistant. They believed in love as a cosmic force. . . . They grew to a mighty number, but it never occurred to them, either in their weakness or their strength, to regard other men as their foes or as aliens. . . . They longed to share the common lot that they might receive the constant revelation. It was a new treasure which the early Christians added to the sum of all treasures — the joy of finding the Christ which lieth in each man, but which no man can unfold save in fellowship.”<sup>2</sup>

The armaments that civilized nations prepare for

<sup>1</sup> *The University Settlement Idea.*

<sup>2</sup> *The Subjective Necessity of Social Settlements.* By Jane Addams.

protection against each other not only contradict this spirit of Christianity, but on a large scale they express that primitive savage instinct of distrust in one another which is found always in human beings of low ethical development—the abiding memory of inherited hatreds and revenges; the lingering habit of self-preservation against physical peril; the ineradicable dread of unexpected attack; the lurking remnant of

“Old, unhappy, far-off things, and battles of long ago.”

Of this legacy of distrust, Professor Shaler says, “There is an obvious tendency for all sentient creatures to approach others of their kind with a certain fear of harm. This motive is one of the indelible marks in ancient experience of brute and brutal man. Anyone who is trained in studying his own hidden motives may detect the impulse at the moment of contact with the stranger. . . . He will readily note that his state of mind is like that of the soldier in the enemy’s country; fainter, but essentially the same. In the older life it was the necessary state of the individual, for until man conceived of the moral law it was himself against the world. In our own time it is a disease-breeding remnant of what once served a purpose, a moral appendix that now profits death alone.”<sup>1</sup> If Christianity cannot convince us of the mistake of such tactics, modern science can easily prove their folly. “Selection has weeded out those who could neither learn nor forget,” says Professor Giddings in the *Ethics of Social Progress*. What

<sup>1</sup> *The Neighbor*, p. 280.



might be called the psychology of confidence is illustrated by Professor Shaler in a few striking incidents he relates to show that by approaching human beings of even the most unfriendly disposition and of savage propensities in the manner of "the neighbour," they are deprived of their most dangerous weapon, distrust. "By putting away our distrust of the neighbour, we at once destroy what of that motive he has towards us. This fact has been well illustrated by my experience with men in many countries and under varied conditions, most recently by contacts with the people in the long-harassed rural districts of Central Cuba, where the unfortunate folk have become so imbued with the war spirit, that the countryman rides armed like a trooper. Frequently, as I approached, I could see that he loosened his pistol in his holster, usually keeping his hand on the butt. It was evident, however, that I was quite unarmed, and as I paid no attention to the attitude of combat of these men, they were at first rather disconcerted; but in a moment their excellent human nature broke through the restraints of custom and they became friendly. . . . It needs no wide-ranging experience to show that with all sorts and conditions of men, even with the professional villain, confidence in their sympathetic motive inevitably awakens a like emotion. The reaction is indeed as certain as that which arouses fear or hate. It may be as safely assumed as any other natural phenomena. I have tried this method of approaching men for many years, often in situations which to the doubter would



have seemed perilous; yet so far as I can discern I have been by it so well protected that I have never been near to danger. I am sure that the manhood of the other man has given me a better defence than precautions could have afforded." The ethics of Christianity, in fact, are not only congenial to the true principles of human growth in the natural order, but are essentially the same; for we see that it is primarily through the union of mankind in sympathetic relationships that human progress moves most rapidly; and such union is Christianity's most vital motive. Christianity has failed of its highest development in the individual life when this motive has been perverted into that narrow interpretation of Christian duty which makes personal salvation only the supreme motive of Christian effort — the "holy selfishness" of an *un*-Christian asceticism — and it has failed in its mission to the world wherever zeal for its own self-preservation as an organization or an institution has replaced that spirit of universal brotherhood which makes it move forward with an all-embracing desire to exclude no member of the human family from its fold. "It is evident," as Professor Shaler says, "that while Christ set his face against all the sins of the flesh, he above all opposed the motive of tribal pride and hatred. With a clearness of understanding which puts him immeasurably above all other leaders, he saw straight to the centre of the ills that beset mankind; saw that they lay in the lack of friendliness for the neighbour of every estate. He sought the cure where we have to seek it, in the

conviction that whatever be the differences between men, they are trifling compared with the identities which should unite them in universal brotherhood."

It is, therefore, the literal meaning of the word neighbour, interpreted in its truest and best sense, that is at the heart of the modern spirit of social reconstruction whose best expression has become embodied in the settlement movement of our time. Although in its literal interpretation, the term "settlement" inadequately expresses the meaning of this movement, the name itself has become associated with movements which manifest some of the best results of settlement effort along lines of social reform. Indeed, the settlement in its best estate does not aim at being an organized social movement or institution, but rather an influence upon these; a tangible expression of the sentiments, ideals, and principles upon which social and political institutions should be founded. By living literally according to the beliefs it professes it becomes such an influence to an extent that no mere preaching of its ideals and principles would ever effect. It neither advocates the revival of ideals or conditions of the past that would be impossible of realization in our present age — like the promoters of the primitive simplicity idea of life — nor does it aim to anticipate the social reformer's dreams of an idealized state of civilization. It lives essentially, literally, and fully in the present; and meets the present on all sides sympathetically, understandingly, and above all with a zeal to help the present which outruns every other one

of its aims. "It is not indeed concerned with distant Utopias, but, on the other hand, it leaves the ethical perspective of the past, even of the immediate past, except so far as to preserve respect for yesterday's motive in forming a postulate for the work of tomorrow. The idealism of the social worker is of the opportunist, possibilist, type. He seeks to take each successive step towards a better social order, which he dares to dream of but does not expect to see let down from the skies. So also the social worker is not primarily a builder of institutions. He seeks first of all to permeate existing institutions with a new spirit, thus gaining for his cause the driving force of the acquired momentum of institutional life. Where suitable organizations do not exist to accomplish results which seem desirable and important, he creates such organizations; but as soon as may be he cuts them adrift, leaving them to go on by their own inherent forces, and trusting that they will gradually gather for themselves the general support of the conservative elements of the community." <sup>1</sup>

The settlement idea must be *lived* rather than taught. This is the only exposition of it that is consistent with its ideals and principles, and the only way it can make itself understood; for few will listen to anyone who would teach others to share the common lot and make common cause with the poor and unfortunate, unless that one had himself exemplified these teachings in his

<sup>1</sup> *Social Work — A New Profession*. By Robert A. Woods. *International Journal of Ethics*, October, 1905.

own life. The settlement, moreover, cannot carry these teachings into the lives of those whom it would help upward to a better social and moral condition unless it demonstrates the value of its ideals by living them among these people; nor without living as far as may be in such contact with their environment and circumstances as will enable its residents to meet with many of the experiences that afflict these lives. "A man who takes the betterment of humanity for his end and aim must also take the daily experiences of humanity for the constant correction of his process," says Jane Addams from the privileged position of one who has put her own theories through a personal test. "To know what life on half a crown a day is like, one ought to have nothing but the half-crown," said Richard Whiteing, in his vain effort to realize the point of view of the social outcasts at "Number 5 John Street"; "I don't believe you can address yourself to these problems from the standpoint of ten thousand pounds a year. The box at the opera, the shooting, and the place of settlement in three counties obscure the view." "Would indeed that we could have some Christianity taught in a way that our Founder taught it, by *living it*. That is the only way; it cannot be put in with a spoon. *Those who would teach must live among those who are to be taught*," said Edward Denison, when he betook himself to the slums of Whitechapel, with his determination to share the life of the poor, to understand by close personal contact with them what obstacles and temptations stood in the way of their moral

and social betterment, before he attempted to help them toward that, or to teach others who would help them the best means to employ toward this end. Such a determination is no more irrational or novel than the motive which leads the scientific man to explore the outermost limit of his own field of knowledge, to turn over every stone and dig into every corner to see what revelations may be made there. Yet a large number of intelligent people to-day refuse to take the social worker seriously in his purpose to go to the bottom of this problem of the poor before he attempts to solve it; just as the Rev. John Richard Green, vicar of St. Philip's, Stepney, and historian of the English people, "could hardly believe that Denison, a young Oxford man of wealth and social position, was in earnest" when he went in 1867 and sought an opportunity to live and work among the parishioners of Green's charge. Indeed, the sincere social worker admits that even at this close range the settlement too often fails to get the real point of view of the people themselves regarding their problems and difficulties. "At their very best," writes a settlement worker, "I am pretty well convinced that the knowledge acquired in lecture halls and in one's daily perambulations from the settlement door, is incomplete and superficial; it is but the beginning of wisdom. We may not thus easily come to know our fellow-man, particularly when he is living in quite different surroundings from those of the student or 'worker,' and battles with an industrial slavery that touches them merely, as it were, with the tip of its black

wings. Life, experience, study, and reflection — all these and more are needed to help one to understand the workingman and our tangled life to-day.”

There are many who advocate the methods of the settlement, yet fail utterly to appreciate the influence upon these methods of the personal motive and character of the social worker; although what Mr. Green said of Edward Denison is invariably true of every successful social worker, “His real power among the poor lay not so much in what he did as in what he was.” It is a truth which can bear reiteration at the present moment, that the real effectiveness of the settlement lies not in its works but in the personal influence of its workers. The various forms of its social activities, clubs and classes for the young people and children and their parents, simply serve as agencies or opportunities by which the influence of settlement ideals and standards may be conveyed to the lives of the people it serves. This purpose has been misunderstood in too many quarters, with the result that the settlement has been sought often for its material benefits alone, for the sake of only social attractions or educational advantages to be found there; and no real effect of its ethical or spiritual influence upon a neighbourhood can be discovered by even the most unprejudiced. In fact, it is no uncommon thing to meet criticism nowadays of its adverse influence upon the best interests of a neighbourhood by making itself such a centre of social attraction that the home suffers by contrast, and the children and young people who frequent the settle-

ment neglect or despise the claims of home duties and relations. Nothing could be more contrary to the aims of the true social worker than such a result as this; for the real field of settlement effort is the home: the re-establishment of home ideals, influences, and relations in an age which needs to have a new evangel preached to it on the value and importance of safeguarding the integrity of this most sacred and venerable of all human institutions. "So long as the first concern of a country is for its homes," says Henry Drummond, "it matters little what it seeks second or third. . . . Looking at the mere dynamics of the question, the family contains all the machinery, and nearly all the power, for the moral education of mankind. . . . The one point, indeed, where all students of the past agree, where all prophets of the future meet, where all the sciences from biology to ethics are enthusiastically at one, is in their faith in the imperishable potentialities of this yet most simple institution."<sup>1</sup>

It is because of its peculiar mission to the home that the real settlement itself takes the form of a home, a family group who practise rather than preach ideals of right living and right relationship of human beings to each other. "If the desire in our philanthropic endeavour is to 'inculcate habits of providence and self-dependence,' to make the poor diligent in their work, to give them an interest in the welfare and advancement of their country, surely it will be best not to remove from them the very incentives and motives

<sup>1</sup> *The Ascent of Man*, p. 305.



that in all ages and lands have proved the most powerful in nerving men to exertion and effort. The hope in a man's heart of having a home, whose roof may shelter father and mother when they are old, and where his children may grow up shielded from the dangers of the world, has been a potent factor in the progress of humanity; it has launched ships, and dared tempests, and felled forests, and conquered fierce and hostile tribes, and made the American nation. No philanthropy that weakens this motive, that does not aim at all costs to preserve and strengthen it, can contribute to social progress." <sup>1</sup>

Hence it will be seen that the settlement ideal is a way of life rather than a system of teaching. This way of life makes so searching a test of the motives and character of those who seek to live and work according to its ideal that no inferior character or insincere motive can live for very long under this test without revealing its insufficiencies. The life itself, with its constant outlook upon the most unlovely and distorted aspects of the social organism, would be all but intolerable to those who are destitute of that kind of moral or spiritual idealism which can illuminate the darkest aspects of human existence with the divine light of faith, hope, and charity; and who

"trust that good shall fall  
At last — far off — at last, to all."

It is probably\* on account of this personal test that defects of individual workers in the settlement become

<sup>1</sup> *Philanthropy and Social Progress*. Rev. J. O. S. Huntington in *Philanthropy and Morality*; p. 167.



so quickly apparent to their neighbours. It has not the advantages of institutional life for shielding its individual members from criticism, for it does not assume responsibility for the personal conduct of its members as an institution does; nor does it attempt either to form or reform, or to impress its character upon the personality of individuals according to institutional methods. Rather, it draws its inspirations from the ideals of its members and follows their initiative in working out its policies. While this may make each settlement group unique in its own work and character, it differentiates the household of one settlement from another only in the same way that one family group differs from another according to the temperament and traits of its members, while their standards of personal conduct and principles are identical. "The true attitude for every social worker," as Mr. Woods says, "is that of a member of a noble family, in which there is the widest inequality, but equality and inequality are never thought of, and greater knowledge and strength mean only greater love and service."

If a person has not already a clear idea of the true purpose of a settlement and a generous development of the settlement spirit before entering upon its works, it will be hard to acquire the right point of view of both its work and purpose afterwards; for the daily experiences of the settlement worker with humanity are often of a kind that the broadest humanitarianism will fail under unless it has stored up spiritual ideals and moral strength that can withstand the shock of human

disillusions. "What is so bad in it," wrote Edward Denison of life in a London slum, "is not what 'jumps at the eyes,' as the French say. . . . What is so bad is the habitual condition of this mass of humanity — its uniform mean level, the absence of anything more civilizing than a grinding organ to raise the ideas beyond the daily bread and beer. . . . My wits are getting blunted by the monotony and *ugliness* of this place. I can almost imagine — difficult as it is — the awful effect upon the human mind of never seeing anything but the meanest and vilest of men and man's works, and of complete exclusion from the sight of God and his works." This was from one who in another mood could write, "The drama of humanity strikes me as surpassing the interest of all possible poetry and fiction in its sublimity, its intensity, in all that appeals to whatever of us is not material. It is like looking on at the most exciting play, only a million times better." Yet Green described Denison's as "a nature that recoils from extremes"; one whose "intellectual moderation and moral fervour," and whose "quiet good sense of character," impressed Green more than the heroic traits of his character which Denison always strove to keep as far out of sight as possible. "I came to learn and not to teach," he laughed on first meeting Green. He was indeed a good type of the settlement idealist, yet this did not make him immune from those extreme reactions of moral feeling which haunt the heroic mood even in the finest spirits. It is such reactions from the unlovely aspects of life outside the settlement that

at times obscure the most hopeful idealism within; and the only thing that can support the moral nature of the social worker over the rough places and through the dark days is that inward consecration of faith, hope, and charity which holds the soul true to its pledges against the passing whims, emotions, and moods of its lower self. No vague religion of humanity will afford such resources as are needed at times like this; for it is from humanity itself that the soul reacts with sickening disappointment when the light of its spiritualized conception of life goes out and only the flat ugly realism of things strikes upon its consciousness. Every soul must fight through such moods, and none more desperately than those who are suffering from that disillusionment about humanity in general that comes from having placed too much confidence, love, or hope in humanity in particular; or from having had one's whole outlook upon the human race suddenly obscured because for the moment "the race happens to be represented by a drunken woman or an idiot boy."

In its inward spiritual aspirations more than in its outward humanitarian professions the settlement movement is prophetic of that deep and hidden trend of the human race toward a universal brotherhood beside which our present interpretation of democracy may at some distant day seem but a parody. The things that are nearest to the heart of the race often appear the most strange and even grotesque when they at last appear in visible shape — like the new-born infant to its

mother's eyes. In such a way we have looked upon this visible manifestation of humanity's secret growth toward a social regeneration in which "democracy will get rid of the natural man of each for himself, and have a new birth into the spiritual man, the ideal self of each for all."

Yet one reasonably questions how this may come about, mankind being what it is, — composed of elements of the brute and the god alternately striving for and winning the mastery over the weaker ones of the race. What is the true inward relation between this dream of a spiritualized democracy and the primary principles of Christian civilization? "As a mere economic formula, democracy must ever fade off into Bellamy visions of a glorified (city) with superior drains," says Richard Whiteing; "the underground system of the human being is the thing we must first set right. A mere nagging negation will never serve." Truly, as he pertinently says, "Without religion, how is man, the essentially religious animal, to face the most tremendous of all problems — social justice? Religion . . . is his breath of life. Such progress as he has ever made has been in accordance with such religions as he has had. Poor as they may have been they have been adequate in their hour. What is most essential in them is what has least changed: Love, justice, brotherhood — ever the voice has whispered these, or proclaimed them in trumpet tones. Only the *systems* are the things that have had their day." And after all, as he further says, with the courage of a

noble conviction, "Democracy is a religion, or nothing, with its doctrine, its form, its ritual, its ceremonies, its cenobites, its government as a church — above all, its organized sacrifice of the altar, *the sacrifice of self*. This is the deepest craving of human nature. All attempts to reconcile man's heroism to his interests have ever failed. His goodness must ever make him smart."

This is the form in which a twentieth-century humanitarian expresses his conception of that ideal relation of love and service between the members of the universal human family to which he believes the race must come in time by the sheer force of its inward and spontaneous development toward a higher destiny even in this world. "There is no escape," he says, "from the iron law of brotherhood. All solutions but this have had their trial and all have failed. Never was their failure more awfully conspicuous than it is to-day, when nine-tenths of mankind still live as brutes in regard to all that makes life worth living, while the other tenth rots in character with the infirmities of plethora and excess. Ring out the old, ring in the new, the great moral renaissance, the new types of man and woman developed by liberty working in the domain of love and law." This is a finely heroic and more modern way only of declaring belief in the second of the two great commandments — Love thy neighbour as thyself; it is less poetic and appealing, with all its noble sentiments, than that touching definition of the obligation to the neighbour which a young

mediaeval mystic wrote under the illuminating impulse of Divine Love many centuries before a democracy such as we proclaim in these latter days was ever dreamed of. Speaking in the form of a "Dialogue," with the inward Voice in her soul, Saint Catherine of Siena thus translated the meaning of the words of this Voice in its definition of love, human and divine:

"Thou knowest that the commandments of the law are completely fulfilled in two: to love Me above everything, and thy neighbour as thyself; which two are the beginning, the middle, and the end of the law." There are four degrees through which the soul must pass to reach the perfect state, is said by the Voice: fear of the Lord; love of Him for His gifts, and the third, "which is a perfect state in which they taste charity, and having tasted it, give it to their neighbour. And *through the third* they pass to the fourth, which is one of perfect union with Me. The two last-mentioned states are united — that is to say, one cannot be without the other, for there cannot be love of Me without love of the neighbour, or love of the neighbour without love of Me. . . . This is the state of two dear friends; for though they are two in body, yet they are one in soul through the affection of love, because love transforms the lover into the object loved; and where two friends have but one soul there can be no secret between them; wherefore My Truth said: *I will come and we will dwell together.*" . . . Furthermore, "I require," says the Voice, "that you love Me with the same love with which I love you. This, indeed, you cannot do, because I loved you without being loved. Therefore, to Me, in person, you cannot give the love I require of

you, and I have placed you in the midst of your fellows that you may do to them what you cannot do to Me; that is, to love your neighbour of free grace without expecting any return from him; *and what you do to him I count as done to Me.*"













